

THE ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC

WIRE



ISSUE 194 • APRIL 2000 • £3.10

Morton Subotnick

modular
maestro

Sussan Deyhim's

jukebox

Einstürzende Neubauten

a user's guide

Günter Müller

percussive
peaks

Kid-606

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Plus

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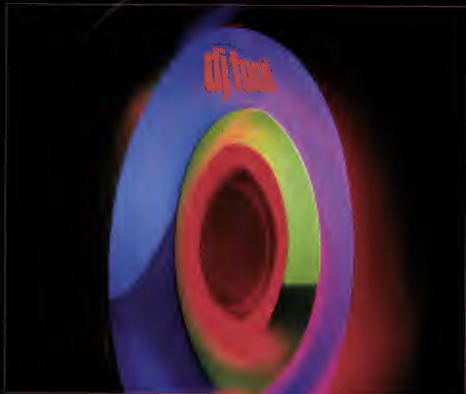
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THE
WIRE
ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC

Issue 194 April 2000

\$3.10/\$7.25 ISSN 0952-0685 (USPS 005231)

45-46 Poland Street - London W1V 3DT - UK

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Images Amy & Tanveer, Frank Bauer, Dean Belcher, Nigel Bennett, Vince Dolman, Melanie Grizeel, Oily Hewitt, Tim Keat, Simon Leigh, Joe Miles, Savage Pencil, Nik Strangelylove, Michelle Turland, Eva Vermanded, Johnny Volcano, Wendy

Cover photo of Col's John Balance: **Dean Belcher**

Thanks to Douglas Gentof, Miriam Inge, Sarah Park, and Lee

Distribution	
UK & Europe	USA
COMAG Specialist	Eastern News Distributors
Taitstock Works	West 55th Street
Taitstock Road	New York, NY 10019 USA
West Grayton	Tel 212 649 4484
Midlexim UB7 7QK	usa.newstend@comag.com
Tel 01895 433800	Call Toll Free 1800 221 3149
Fax 01895 433801	

Subscriptions	Rates (12 issues)
The Wire	UK £36
45-46 Poland Street	Europe £50
London W1V 30F UK	USA/Canada \$85/\$50
Hotline +44 (0)20 7734 3555	Rest Of World
E-mail subswire@ukonline.co.uk	\$60 An/\$50 Surface

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Printed by Times P/L • Reproduction by GFI Graphics
This title is a member of the Namara Group
USA: the Wire 004 095 2-0846-0049 (0562 211) published monthly for \$60
by The Wire Magazine Ltd. Periodicals postage paid at Champlain, NY 12919-
1518. Domestic and foreign address changes in The Wire to P.O. of New York, P.O.
Box 1518, Champlain, NY 12918-1518.

editor's idea

There's a moment at the conclusion of Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (keep reading), where happy, soon to be married heroes and heroines exit the stage, and the darkness falls in a production I recently witnessed, at Bristol's excellent new Tobacco Warehouse theatre, in a reclaimed industrial unit close to the city's harbour, the transition is marked by a sudden plunge into shadow, the ethereal figure of Puck sweeps out the mortals' charmed dwelling invading the creeping dangers and sinister noises of the nocturnal realm. It's a brief interlude that is mostly glossed over in average versions of the play, here it's a chilling sequence whose ritual quality might strongly appeal to the members of *Colt*, this month's cover artists, who are indeed now denizens of the dark shores of the Severn estuary, not many miles away from Bristol.

In the Mike Leigh film *Topsy Turvy*, Englishness is depicted in its accustomed Victorian sense in every sense an embarrassment, a naggingly burdensome of uncommunicative politesse, emotional distance, mocking xenophobia and hypocritical sex mores. Popular culture loves this whalebone-corseted view of Englishness at the moment period costumes cloak the land's secret life that seethes out of the dark. The visions that emerge in John Balance's *Colt* songtexts tell of this life, unburden the proof of Britain's poetic soul to counterbalance its pragmatic political bodies.

This month's issue is packed with people telling stories that aren't given voice in official histories. Our Invisible Jukeboxee, Iranian vocalist Sussan Deyhim, unveils her mother country's hidden horror, which particularly applies to the women of Iran, by vigorously reaffirming a Sufi tradition which conventional Islam makes illegal. Her cross-cultural work with the likes of Bill Laswell and

Peter Gabriel pushes ecstatic Sufi song into the bloodstream of World Music, while her 'Ambient' recordings with Richard Horwitz are lent an urgency the genre too often lacks by their immersion in the work of Paul Bowles and Brian Gysin. Meanwhile, Biba Kopf's *Primer* on the recordings of Einstürzende Neubauten, as well as eloquently cataloguing the German group's rawaged and complex urban blues, also paints a vivid portrait of Berlin's blasted cityscape which prevailed in the decades before today's tranquilised, reconstructing Euro-hub.

England's dreamers are, like Coli, traditionally a hidden lot, communicating from murky lairs to reduced circles of inmates, and requiring some effort on your part to find them out. It doesn't always have to be that way. The Institut du Monde Arabe, a Jean Nouvel-designed edifice on the banks of the Seine in Paris, is an extraordinary example of a public institution dedicated to telling the story of one of France's former colonies — not from the Arab world's point of view. A British equivalent would probably be something like a National Asian or West African Centre, built by Norman Foster and situated on the Thames opposite the Houses of Parliament. Which, sadly, still seems decades away.

At least, Balance and his partner Peter Christopherson will be blinking in the lights of the South Bank Centre this month — emerging for an unprecedented live appearance, which was one of several reasons we decided to embroil them on this month's cover. You don't have to believe in magic to appreciate *Cod*. They may claim to give voice to the Other Side, but there are many Other Sides, not all of them supernatural.

ROB YOUNG

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Church of the open mind

I'd like to register my (respectful) complete disagreement with Francesca Morsalves letter (*The Wire* 193). There are a number of specifically hardcore improvisation music magazines available (at least in England) such as *Avant* or the LMC's *Resonance*. The thing that strikes me as really extraordinary about *The Wire* is its open mindedness: not to deny Tony Conrad the front cover because he hasn't had Top Ten hits, but also not to deny it to Björk because she has. This recognition that music is great irrespective of how few (or how many) people buy it is truly refreshing.

I also think that it is — in many ways — artists such as Tortoise, Scanner or Arto Lindsay that need attention paid to them, especially in this country, not enough alternative cred to get real coverage in the *NME* save the occasional review, but too popular (or populist) for the hardcore magazines I mentioned.

One final thing, the "true heralds of innovation and headway" are to be found in *The Wire* tucked away in the Outer Limits section of your annual lists, while "the most persuasive" record is damned to be a "populist/populist" one such as "Tricky, Sonic Youth, Porthead". Am I mistaken, or was the second record listed in the 99 *Review's* Outer Limits section not by Sonic Youth?

Dominic Lash Cambridge

As the only mainstream magazine covering this sort of music, I think you should give more space to exciting new rock based artists. While you give covers and long articles to musicians such as Porthead and Björk, who get written about everywhere and are pretty mainstream, or Sonic Youth who are hardly "adventures in modern music" any more, groups such as Mogwai, Third Eye Foundation, Godspeed You Black Emperor! etc are deemed worthy only of "In Brief" reviews and occasional short articles. Even albums that you voted into your top five avant rock releases of the year get hard done by *The Bonnie 'Prince' Billy* album and the Godspeed You Black Emperor! EP were not reviewed at all, and the Low album only got an In Brief review. Neither of the new Mogwai releases were in your top 15, while the likes of *The Fall*, Car and Blue Cheer all were. I am not asking you to ignore innovative music from the past, but please don't exclude its modern counterparts.

Oliver Brice Jerusalem, Israel

The Bonnie 'Prince' Billy LP prompted a Will Oshram story in *The Wire* 180. Godspeed's New Riot EP was



Volcano laid bare

Ed Baxter's review of Magma's London gig in the March issue was supremely enjoyable: a fitting nod to a clever-dick age perhaps symbolised as a global cybernetic asse extruding virtual crap. Well done, Ed.

Simon Fay Glossop

reviewed in issue 184's Outer Limits column: 'The Records of the Year are voted for (or not) by our writers. When it comes to Mogwai, make of that what you will' — Ed

Rap on the knuckles

Just a couple of points for the pedantic, re: *The Wire* 192. That issue's cover stars, West Coast Hip-hop collective Quannum/Blackalicious, have released more product than you credit them with, as well as the records mentioned in Peter Shapiro's article; there's also the Blackalicious A26 EP and Quannum's Spectrum Instrumental.

There was also some kind of transcription error in the Lemmy Jubilee: the name of Bill Laswell's engineer is Jason Casaro (and not Gassaro).

Points made: Over and out.

Andrew Beck via e-mail

Lemmy caution

What on earth is going on over there? My last letter gently chided *The Wire* for the Iggy Pop cover and article (issue 189). But now I find Lemmy doing an invisible Jukebox (192)? His remarks and demeanour were abysmal. I just cannot understand why you chose to incorporate this element into the mix. It was absolutely useless, and truly insulting (and I'm no snob). Are you in trouble at *The Wire*? Was there a broad editorial decision made? "Let's get some of these headbangers in here, it's just too stuffy!" As a longtime reader, I admit that the plethora of new pop acts hawking the same recycled cyber-socio-self-serving visions we enjoyed back when they were newer (Richard James, Alex Paterson, etc) has become emotionally flat and uninspiring, but to take such a sharp turn into the greaser-hard rock direction is frankly mystifying. All this editorial nonsense, just when I finally get a subscription. Lemmy obviously hates everything *The Wire* stands for (sound manipulation, HipHop, synthetic sound), and I'm sure he's never picked up a copy except maybe to "hope me aise with". If the point was to make a complete idiot of Lemmy, the job was well done, but I couldn't be less interested in his braindead antics.

"THE WIRE MAGAZINE HERGES WITH MOJO!" If you really support Lemmy and Iggy, I dare you to put a recent song of theirs on your next *Wire* Tapper CD. Yeah right! Not. There are so many composers and performers out there that deserve our attention. So much more to be said about the world of musical progress. I must admit I'm at a loss. If you are looking for a wider audience, I can only say that you're losing me, for one. This kind of reading is not what I signed on for.

Charles Henry James via e-mail

Don't slap surrealists

I stopped buying *The Wire* a while ago after one of your contributors made an incredibly uninformed comment about Antonin Artaud being, if I can remember correctly, "an old lady". Chancing upon Ian Penman's excellent review of Stephen Barber's latest book on Artaud, *The Screaming Body* (Pint Run, *The Wire* 192) is welcome redress. It also made me buy the magazine.

One concern, though. Calling the Surrealists en masse "those old mads of fake madness" isn't good enough, although I can understand why Penman made such a statement. When dealing with Artaud, it seems inevitable to try to compare his remarkable

Jah Wobble

Jah Wobble and Deep Space



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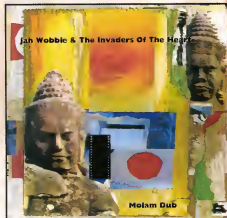
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personality to contemporaries, those influenced by him, and perhaps to oneself! Such comparisons don't reveal a lack on our part, but they do reveal Artaud to be utterly 'other'. Take a look at the attempts of Grotowski, Brock and Julien Beck to experiment (or at least come to terms) with his ideas in the 60s. They didn't fail. They simply went as far as Artaud allowed them. Are they, too, to be regarded as 'old masters'?

Insulting the Surrealists doesn't help explain him, nor does it elevate him further. Then again, I've yet to read a conclusion about Artaud that doesn't sound like retreat (my own included). And everyone retreats with a piece of his shrapnel lodged in them.

Nike Seed Isle of Man

India song

Thanks for the Primer on North Indian music (*The Wire* 192) — lots of interesting leads to follow. But I feel obliged, however, to recommend one CD that was not mentioned: *Ravi's Sister-in-law*. This is Indian vocal music of the highest order. Not shrill singing here, but khyal, tarana, bhajan and the like. Stark, austere and beautifully controlled singing, but still with a lot of warmth and soft humility. The music touches deeply from the first breath heard. This is what New Age music aspires to, and it fails hopelessly. I'm looking forward to more Primers on ethnic music styles, especially on gamelan.

Karl Tideman Sweden

Killing fields revisited

I saw the Diamanda Galas article (*The Wire* 190/191) and I have one quibble: the first genocide of the 20th century was not, as she states, of Armenians, but actually the annihilation of the Herero people of what was then German South West Africa (which we now call Namibia) by the German army and settlers. I recall my reading correctly, the Hereros were forced off their lands and driven into the desert where they were either shot or left to die from starvation, thirst and disease into the interior, indeed.

The 1915 genocide of Armenians by the Turkish was the latest and worst of an on-again-off-again series of massacres that began in 1895. The current Turkish government refuses to apologise or compensate, reasoning that these massacres were carried out by the Ottoman Turkish regime and modern Turkey is a completely different country now.

The red tragedy for Armenians today is that in the current unstable political situation in the Caucasus, they may be tempted to use similar repressive and genocidal measures against Azeri and other minorities in Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh/Irskakh region and to exploit the 1895-1915 massacres as a propaganda tool to stifle outside criticism of actions they take against non-Armenians.

Jennifer Hor Gordon, Australia

The straight Storey

I've been reading *The Wire* for many years and am always happy to disagree with you because you publish a great magazine. But this time I am responding regarding the reviews of Rapoon's *Navigating By Colour* and *What Do You Suppose in The Wire* 192.

Matt Mytche seemed baffled and unaffected by these CDs' quality and concept of motion and interplay between the visual and sound arts. On both of these releases, and Rapoon's especially, Rapoon's Robin Storey has created music with visual art that is completely complementary and enhances the overall enjoyment of the music. Rapoon has never so effortlessly married non-traditional packaging and imaging with musical ideas. I can understand some of his criticism of *What Do You Suppose*: conspiracy theory is a slightly over-used concept and point of departure for musicians. But when acutely listened to, it reveals a playfulness with this subject, and a radical new side to Rapoon's output by centering vocals so prominently in his work.

In a climate where anyone with a computer can whip out crap digital Ambient goo and sheen art, and make (bottom line always) consumer products, Robin Storey stands out as a craftsman who has skills and ideas, and who cares about his music's presentation. Perhaps reviews such as Mytche's prompted the excellent 1998 LP *Just Say The Faith* and its song titled "Fuck The Wire".

Soll reading Sell Istanbul!

Scott Hudgins via e-mail

Hungary pangs

I am writing with reference to the Tarnadai compilation CD that came free to subscribers with *The Wire* 190/191. First of all, many thanks to Tarnadai for their work, please continue. I went through the record and not so surprisingly had a time travel, but instead of forward it was backwards. Maybe I should comment on the Hungarian contributors only, but I cannot resist expressing my overall disappointment with the boredom and lack of novelty of most of the music heard. Many songs on the record have a folkloric pedigree, which can be interesting, and easy to relate to, but is not necessarily a true picture of music in the East European countries. Luckily there are some exceptions like Mapa and Ewa Braun of Poland, and Croatia's Projekt-Projekt. Sometimes I had the feeling that this compilation was made in line with the way you people in Western countries wanted to see us, a bit European and a bit exotic. Of course Tarnadai had to cook from given materials, and indeed they must have had a hard time finding interesting music from the few independent labels here. I do not know about other countries, but I think that in Hungary compiles would have found something more exciting if they had had a closer look. I know and respect the work of the Hungarian participants, but their music hardly can be regarded as

new as the subtitle suggests. Neither are they new by age. They have new records, but does the fact mean that they play new music too?

Andras Mun via e-mail

Buenos Aires and graces

I have just become a subscriber to your magazine, having discovered it in 1994 in Zurich airport. Always looking for new and surprising music/magazine maps, I bumped into the Massive Attack cover of *The Wire*. I was astonished by the overall quality, and simply fell in love. In Argentina, where I finally settled (I was living and playing volleyball in Israel at the time), it is impossible to get current issues of the magazine, and I finally made an effort and decided to subscribe.

In the light of your 99 Review (190/191), I would add my own personal favours: *Incredible Sound Of Gilles Peterson*, an amazing retro-futurist mix of many different music genres, Vertigo by Groove Armada, cinematic, beautiful and groovy of course, Play By Play, impressive sampling, peaceful mood, K+D Sessions by Kruder & Dorfmeister, absolutely love this compilation, especially *Depeche Mode*, Alex Reece and Lamb mixes, and *FSK#3* by Bentley Rhythm Ace, finding awesome, with displaced tracks all over the mix. Still can't find a soul album to match Lewis Taylor in the past four years. Now the local, perhaps unavailable outside of Argentina *Bonobos* by Gustavo Cerbasi, Argentinian pop singer goes solo after his great group Soda Stereo, *Los Tormentos De Milton* by Adrian Laes Tino, a twisted take on tango and jazz that takes jazz standards and subverts them to tango, and vice versa, *Velodromatolocalismo* by Altocarnet, Techno-pop from Mar del Plata.

Hope that this mail hasn't been too long, too boring or too simple, with no intention of sounding ironic. I absolutely respect and praise the magazine and its contributors in their entirety, and hope *The Wire* never ever goes away from our world. Thank you for being there. Oh, and look down south.

Gustavo Palosky Buenos Aires, Argentina

Pedestrian zone

When will you resurrect the flâneur? Myself and countless other non-media beings would probably agree that the non-holistic dominance of popular culture has for too long been the target of your type. Certainly civilization, as perilous as it may be, has benefitted greatly from electromagnetic pioneers, but surely it is time to throw off those pause buttons and consider the fifth mode of listening. Move out of the recorded spectrum and give up the anti-ear. Hands back the headphones and learn to listen! May I suggest more blank pages, perhaps a feature on the World Soundscapes Project, and what about 'genetical sound'? Be a good scribble and bring back that nice Mr. Toop while you're wiping away the flowers too.

Constance Flier via e-mail

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bites

Kid-606

Glitch glyphs

If Kid-606 had grown up in the 60s, his teen tantrum records would now be collected on the *Teenage Shutdown and Back To The Groove* series. However, Kid-606 was born at the dawn of the Reagan-Thatcher era and instead of sporting a pudding bowl haircut, imitating The Stones and wailing about not getting laid over Farfisa organ peels and disintegrating fuzzbox riffs, Kid-606 spills vinegar over his NWA albums, takes out his post-adolescent angst on a candy-coloured Mac and records it straight to DAT.

Born in Venezuela but raised in Southern California, the product of a dysfunctional marriage, the Kid is a natural non-joker. A bright, inquisitive boy, he grew up in a navy town surrounded by deadening conservatism. Whether getting beaten up by bored, drunken frat thugs from San Diego State University or railing against the elitism of the electronica scene with which he's linked, his outsider anger has never been far from the surface. Not that this is without its peculiar advantages: "I grew up in many different places," the Kid relates via e-mail, "and went to an alternative school after various social problems in junior high school and a bad incident with a defective model rocket that blew off the end of my left pointer finger. It created lots of medical problems, but in the long run provided me with the funds to get equipment at an early age and buy lots of records. By going to the alternative school I was able to take community college courses to get out of high

school when I was 16 and never looked back."

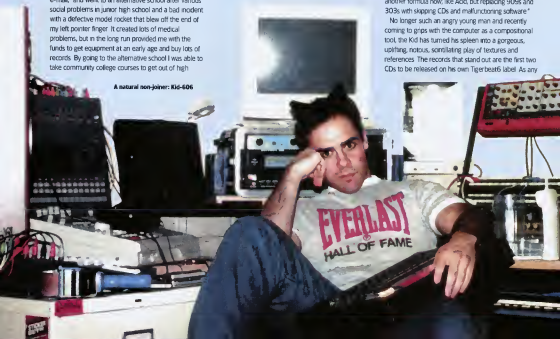
With such a background, it's hardly surprising to learn that he got into Heavy Metal (courtesy of his older brother), but he wasn't inspired to make music until he heard the "hard electronic music" of Godflesh and Ministry. "Techno Animal's Ghosts just totally had an effect on me," he remembers. "It was one of the first experimental electronic records I had ever heard. I remember vividly when it first came out; it was in the Godflesh section at the record store and was billed as the new Godflesh record. Kevin Martin and Justin Broadrick were humorous influences on me from early on. You never forget the musicians that turned you on to a new way of listening to music and, for me, showing me a new way how music could be made. I didn't grow up with any Techno or cool Stockhausen records in the house, and you just don't get exposed to that kind of stuff in lower middle class America. You had to find it yourself. The only electronic music I heard was HipHop and it just didn't make any sense to me at that age, but by buying what I thought was a Godflesh record and then being blown away and searching for more stuff like that was just amazing and totally opened me up to so much. I got introduced to Vinyl Communications when I was 16 through a friend to help put together Merzbow CDs, and Marino, I had an outlet for all the stuff I had been working on. It's just been a whirlwind of trying to expose myself to as much music as possible and continually evolve as a musician without ever losing or forsaking anything I've learned along the way."

With Vinyl Comm, the Kid released a series of exquisite 12"s that reworked the Hardcore/Gabba formula into a celebration of the sheer, bracing excitement of adrenalin, pink nose and the play of textures. "No matter what label I am on or who is buying my records, the music I am making will always be just a sonic representation of how I was feeling when I made it," the Kid asserts. "I like to be able to look back at the music I've made like an audio diary. I was a very angry kid, and that's what most of my music sounded like because that's exactly where I was at when I made it. If it sounds harsh, it's because that's how I felt."

Unlike so many of his peers, you can actually feel the recoil in the Kid's sonic armoury, he doesn't use the glitch as an intellectual exercise or as a way of surrendering to the sonic sublime of information overload, but as a way of howling at the digital moon. "Without much encouragement I used to be totally obsessed with using glitches and malfunctioning equipment as a sound source," he says. "Because it was different, because of the spontaneity, because it was a new distinguishable palette of sounds to work with that screamed, 'What you see as an error we will use as a voice.' Now it's all just another set of sounds for synthesizer and software manufacturers to make sample libraries out of and we'll eventually be hearing in commercials and pop songs probably. I don't really care for what it's become or the ease with which people have figured out how to make lockdowns out of turning off their Akais while sampling or corrupting plug-ins, or mutilating CD-Rs of test tones. It's another formula now, like Acid, but replacing 909s and 303s with skipping CDs and malfunctioning software."

No longer such an angry young man and recently coming to grips with the computer as a compositional tool, the Kid has turned his spleen into a gorgeous, uplifting, notorous, scintillating play of textures and references. The records that stand out are the first two CDs to be released on his own Tiger beats label. As any

A natural non-joker: Kid-606



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American of a certain age knows, *Tiger Beat* was the teenage girls' magazine of the 70s, and this aesthetic has crept into his ethos. "I'm definitely into the whole teen idol worship thing," he declares, "and Dawsons Crook and all that teen stuff, and the whole idea of youths not putting off their creative and artistic tendencies until they are older and just fudging doing it instead of waiting. Not to pull some retarded DHR type youth movement or anything or end up sounding like a paedophile chicken hawk, because I'm not a teen anymore! But we do want to support younger musicians who probably couldn't release stuff anywhere else."

"The name? I'm a Leo, love cats, love beats, lots of our music is pretty beat oriented so it just works great. ... I just realised it's like that Riot Beats label but replacing the 'not' with 'teen again' and 'cutey feline kitsch, works fine for me!' **PETER SHAPIRO** Kid-606 & Friends Vol 1 is out now on *Tigerbeats*

Jackie-O Motherfucker

Oedipal wreckers

Like Dylan and The Band before them, Portland Oregon's Jackie-O Motherfucker have gone back to the basement to soak in the high lonesome sounds of primitive Americana. Their new disc *Fig 5* comes as an unexpected shot out of leftfield for anyone who has been following their trajectory over the past few years. While undoubtedly a splendid marriage of ESP improvisations and heavy motorik charge, the earlier *Flat-Fixed* double set did little to prepare you for the range of bases they're presently touching on. *Fig 5* is a seamless trawl through the margins of American music, sating in battered electronics, haunting spirituals, atonal chrome, fuzzed surf guitar, hayseed Country and jazz.

"I definitely think of it as American music," confirms Jackie-O's mainman Tom Greenwood. "We are a

young country though. When our ancestors speak to us, who knows where they're calling from. We live in a very ambiguous, screwed up culture. It may be years before we know what tradition we belong to. People are constantly labeling things to try to sell them as cultural commodities. People have made millions on the term 'modern primitive' — all it really means is that your face looks like a fishing lure."

Jackie-O Motherfucker have been operating since 1994, based around the core of saxophonist Nestor Bucket and guitarist/tape manipulator Greenwood. Before then, Greenwood was playing guitar with Matador signings Railroad Jerk and running his own label, Project A-Bomb, whose greatest triumph was unleashing the Beelheart skronk of Scotland's Dog Faced Hermans on an unsuspecting US public. "Initially we played over a reel-to-reel machine plugged into an amplifier," he recalls. "The tapes we used consisted of collages of music and found sound assembled while living in New York before moving to Portland. There was a lot of plagiarism involved — skipping CDs intentionally and looping drum patterns — the intention being to produce rhythm patterns and sounds that I couldn't find in the limited pool of musicians I was acquainted with at the time."

Live, Jackie-O are every bit as unpredictable as you'd expect from their records. "There are so many factors involved in what any given live performance will sound like," explains Greenwood. "Which members actually turn up for the gig is a big factor on the sound produced. Also, the type of venue usually determines how we approach a performance, we may improvise more on some occasions. Usually a recording hits the streets six months to a year or so after it's been completed, and by that time we've stumbled onto something completely different. At our last gig we only did two songs from the new record."

Though *Fig 5* feels like a paradigm leap to outsiders, Greenwood sees their aesthetic trajectory from the first LP as being fairly consistent. "From the outset it was partially derived from materials at hand," he continues. "Reel-to-reel machines, eight track cartridges, old turntables, amps and

mixers — things we could find at a junk store for nothing and utilise for our own purposes. This has been maintained over the years — we've just become more proficient at what we acquire and for what purpose the materials are used. We also seem to attract, and be attracted to, people with the same sort of mentality. So, mechanically, our arsenal has really increased over the years. As for musical content, there is a concurrent path — further development on musical forms that harmonise with us collectively. It is unspoken, but definitely a language that we've developed."

Throughout *Fig 5* the benign spirit of occult visionary, musicologist and movie maker Harry Smith hovers over the proceedings. The album has the air of a field recording, its purity of sound and rough-assed way with tradition is not a million miles from the 'lost, archaic, savage' sounds collected by Smith on his *Anthology Of American Folk Music*. Its recent reissue, combined with Revenant's ongoing documentation of American Primitivism, have resulted in a renewed interest in folk and its links with freedom music.

"Harry Smith was an American genius," Greenwood enthuses. "His work has profoundly affected me since I first became familiar with his hand-painted films around 1988. After studying more about him I've realised what a huge impact on our culture he had. He was a psychedelic grand poobah! His interest in repetitive patterns and the universal cultural connections contained therein — whether he's talking about Navajo Indian blankets, Ukrainian Easter egg designs or the cosmic vibrations of jazz and folk — has definitely changed the way I see things. As for current cultural context, the world operates within an aesthetic of profit — whatever sells. If people get sick enough of the garbage being peddled by companies as 'music', they may begin to become interested in freer and more primitive sounds. One can only hope."

Like many of the artists on Smith's anthology, Greenwood talks about his music in magical terms, of "conjuring, consoling spirits, visions, hallucinations and harsh reality. For us the action of making music is a spiritual process. Moving energy, creating a community, trying to get our egos out of the way and giving the music what it needs to continue. It's difficult, but we seem to somehow be healthier for doing this music. I don't know it, in sum, coming together to create something greater is intrinsically spiritual. There needs to be a unity of consciousness among the parts before going into the process to begin with. I think personal motivation has everything to do with this."

New trails are opening up all the time, with a double LP, *The Majok Fire Music*, due on Ecstatic Peace! and another to follow on UK label FishEye. A question about his contemporaries prompts Greenwood to rattle off a list of what's been listening to recently — Don Cherry, Yoko Ono — but he's stumped when it comes to naming any current like-minded souls. "I guess we're pretty much out there on our own," he deadpans. **DAVID YEEHAN** *Fig 5* is out now on Roadzone

The Jackie-Os go for that high lonesome sound



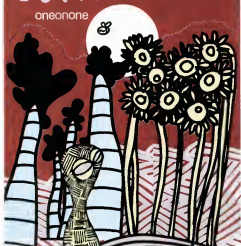
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Kim Cascone

Silent runner

"I enjoy the stark, harsh, cold, unemotional quality of computer music," declares Kim Cascone, "and I'm not a big fan of 'emotional' electronic music. But there's enough room for both sorts of music in the world."

Electronica is often accused of operating under a bunker mentality. Kim Cascone takes it a little too literally. His recorded trilogy *blueCube*, consisting of fogs of software-processed tones and wide tundrae flecked with pops and clicks, takes off from a paranoid dream Cascone had about a prototype computer mainframe secreted within an underground Cold War chamber. "I had rented an abandoned mainframe computer room to create a CD for Silent Records back in 1995," says the composer, who has been wired into synthesized and programmed musics since studying at Benicome College during the early 70s. "During that time I had been thinking a lot of the period surrounding 'mainframe culture' in the US during the late 60s and early 70s. The mainframe invoked a particular image in the public's consciousness that was reflected in the media. There was a lot of paranoia and fear of computers back then. Films like *The Exorcist* painted a bleak picture of a world where computers would take over society and maintain a dictatorship. So the fear response shaped how most of the Western world viewed the computer until it became something that could sit on our desk and make our lives easier. The use of computers in the arts helped to stretch people's awareness, but also created an impression that an alien machine intelligence was at work and could only create simple, childlike artwork. Seeing the computer evolve over the years has been like watching a child grow up and gain mastery over

talking, singing and drawing. That era is long forgotten or not even known by most of the younger electronic musicians today, but it was a rich time in art history that should be mined for content."

During the 90s, Cascone seemed more interested in mining the present for new talent. He formed the US Ambient label Silent in 1986, but only really began to concentrate on it in 1991, when he abandoned his post as David Lynch's Assistant Music Editor (he produced and co-directed the sound on *Twin Peaks* and *Wild At Heart*). Silent was an ambitious attempt to capture the shift from more hardbitten avant-garde electronics and post-industrial sounds into the encroaching electroacoustic Ambient tendency. As such, it could embrace the gentler sounds of Haruomi Hosono and Wavelength Transmissions, as well as conceptual work by OM Von Hauswaffel, electroacoustics from Michael Redolf, Merbow's raging fuzz, and the urban discotapes of Canadian radio artist Chris Melchoe. Although he sold the company in apparently unhappy circumstances in 1996, after it had expanded to include distribution in its remit, he subsequently joined Hoaxspace, the multimedia operation run by 80s technopop biffon Thomas Dolby, and where he continues to forge new software alchemies for use in alchemical sonic translations.

"I've been interested in alchemy for many years now," says the man who at one time ran three labels called Flask, Sulphur and Furnace. "I see it as an elegant description of the path that a spiritualistic seeker takes — it has little to do with the transmutation of lead into gold and more with the various stations of achieving spiritual enlightenment in a human world."

Cascone's *blueCube* project takes a meandering step back into the environment in which he first encountered and studied electronic music. Later, he introduced the notion of 'Anechoic sound', taken from the 'nothingness chamber' used by John Cage to try to determine what silence sounds like (and found out there was no such thing), with the 1995 solo CD *Anechoic*. The concept now informs the entire scope of his work, along with the view that 'electronic and Hip-Hop both have taken the spirit of the avant-garde movement to the street. It seems that the tools typically come from the academic sector and the innovation comes from the pop sector.'

Although now ensconced in San Francisco, he doesn't like to perform there, instead he'll be travelling to the UK for this month's Lovebytes festival in Sheffield to unveil the final part of *blueCube*. "I will be doing a live mix of a work in progress titled *Residualism*. I've made four CDs containing 50 tracks of various sounds created using pulsar synthesis and convolution techniques. I will set each CD player on random shuffle and mix the material on the fly, not knowing what to expect. I never liked performing due to having to haul gear around, so I'm building — quote Robert Fripp — a 'small mobile, intelligent unit' for performing live. This makes performing much easier and more importantly, more fun."

ROB YOUNG (cathode) lower, the second part of the *blueCube* trilogy, is out now on Ritonale. The *Lovebytes* festival opens at the beginning of April. See Out There Kim Cascone Website: www.anechoicmedia.com

bitstream

Recall a Kadouza for **OTTA HAZA**, the Yiddish Jewish diva who died of massive organ failure in February at age 41. One of the first stars of the World Music scene, Haza first came to prominence in Israel in 1979 with "The Tart's Song" — a record that spot in the face of a conservative society's oppressive view of femininity it was her blending of drum machines and ancient devotional poetry, however, that brought her to worldwide acclaim. In 1987 Coldcut sampled her reading of Rabbi Shalom Shabazi's "Im Niranu" on their "Seven Minutes Of Madness Mix" of Eric B & Rakim's "Paid In Full", thus creating one of the greatest remixes of all time and raising Haza's profile beyond the realm of WOMAD travellers +++ More sad news: **Andy Sojka**, one of the true pioneers of British dance music, passed away in 12 February. He will probably be remembered as the man who discovered Level 42, but more importantly Sojka was the man who put behind Armada's, the disco group responsible for the all-time classic "Dancing In Outer Space". Christopher Ross, better known as rapper **Big Punisher**, died on 7 February in White Plains, New York. He was 28 +++ As if curing the Sonic Boom epidemic wasn't enough (see Out There): **David Toop** has recently collaborated with PopMatters writer **Jeff Noon** on a CD *Neslee In The Groove* is a recording of Noon reading his latest novel (of the same name) over Toop's Ambient artworks. The album will be released in May on Robb Rimbaldi's Sulphur label +++ Back from the grave: Next month John Fahey's Revenant label and The Harry Smith Archives will release what was meant to be the fourth volume of Smith's epochal *Anthology Of American Folk Music*.

MUSIC Featuring music from The Carter Family, Buckle White, The Blue Sky Boys, Leadbelly and Al Hopkins & His Buckle Busters among others, the previously secret *Harry Smith's Anthology Of American Folk Music*, Volume 4 is every bit as remarkable as the first three. The double-CD package will also include essays by Falvey, Gred Marcus, Ed Sanders, Dick Spottswood and John Cohen of The New Lost City Ramblers +++ Star search: As part of the **BBC Talent** contest, Aurie is on the lookout for new composers. The competition is being overseen by Radio 3's *Planet* programme, and is open to any UK based composers/musicians/groups, just as long as they aren't signed to a major label. Applicants must submit an original piece of music (no less than three minutes, no more than five) on DAT or MiniDisc by 12 May. Shortlisted tracks will be streamed on the Net from the *Planet* iWebsite while the winner will be profiled on the *Planet* i programme and have their music included on a CD given away with BBC Music magazine. For more information and an application form, log on to www.bbc.co.uk/planet +++ More names are being added to the bill of this year's **Metabound** festival on the South Bank, which is being curated by Scott Walker. Confirmed attractions for the June event now include Jim O'Rourke, Sinig, Plego's Fuchried and something called Rockhead +++

Television soundtrack acts: Howard Goodall continues his **Big Bang** series on Channel 4 covering events that shook the musical world. On 26 March Goodall discusses Pythagoras's invention of equal temperament, on 2 April he covers Bartolomeo's invention of the piano, and on 9 April Goodall talks about Thomas Edison's invention of the gramophone and the development of recording.

THE TRAILER



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"I chose the name For 4 Ears as a kind of picture of a person moving in sound, getting another perspective," explains Gunter Müller. "You take one step, and you find another position for your ears, you're getting a third and a fourth ear." Müller is discussing the record label he has run for the past ten years, with nearly 40 releases to date. For 4 Ears was born out of frustration at the uncertainty and delay he experienced while seeking an outlet for his own music, and out of his desire to support new developments in improvisation. "For me, playing music and the work for my label are linked together," he says. "There is some synergistic effect, one activity helps the other."

Müller embodies a regenerated spirit of exploration



that is currently revitalising improvised music in Europe. As label boss and as innovative percussionist he has increasingly made a significant impact well beyond the boundaries of the thriving improvisation scene in Switzerland, his home for more than 30 years. In his musical conception, sounds in themselves take priority over inherited forms, received techniques and the imperatives of rhythmic patterning. He courts collaboration with fellow travellers probing the interface where conventional instrumentation collides with new possibilities thrown up through the use and abuse of electronic resources.

Müller views music "much more as a sculpture or a field than as a linear movement. So, I understand

dynamics in volume as fading from or into space." That understanding is shared by the other members of BTM2, one of his currently active groupings. It teams his idiosyncratic drum voicings, using an electronically modulated kit, with the acoustic and electric violins of Hans Burgener and Carlos Zingaro, while Musica Electronica Viva veteran Richard Tietelbaum manipulates sampling keyboard and computer. The music on the quartet's new CD, *11 Ways To Proceed*, exemplifies the depth of soundfield he favours, with constituent elements advancing into clear articulation or receding into indistinctness as parts of a fluent, collectively crafted whole.

His distinctive kit has developed from a pragmatic solution to the problem of being audible when, in 1981, he found himself caught in a wall of sound generated by two powerful saxophonists. In order to get his small percussion instruments heard, he attached pickup

microphones to them. There followed a series of experiments, attaching mics, extending the limits of the acoustic kit, and eventually altering its character fundamentally. His commitment to "moving in sound" had already led him to destabilise and customise his set with unorthodox additions. In 1975, the German-born drummer went to art college in Basel, and "entered the world of improvised music and free jazz." A concert by Nica, a group featuring pianist Keith Tippett, and fronted by the twin trombones of Nick Evans and Radu Malfatti, proved revelatory. "I was kind of shocked and I left after the first part, but it changed my approach to music," he remembers. The shock was compounded by exposure to the free jazz of John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie, Cecil

Taylor and bassist Alan Silva.

Equally galvanising, yet emanating from a source closer to home, were early releases on Jost Geber's uncompromising FMP label. Rehearsing written material and enacting the role of drummer in a conventional rhythm section no longer seemed so appealing. "Being very curious about new things, and being accustomed as a drummer to rebuilding my instrument all the time, I tried a lot of things. I put the pickups on cymbals, on the cymbal stands, directly on the drumsticks, built sticks with small mics inside them. I used FX boxes, volume pedals, and soon began playing with a pair of old Sony mics in my hands instead of the drum sticks." Initially, Müller's explorations were conducted in isolation, independently from any models he knew. Subsequently, in 1991, he performed alongside Paul Lytton, a pioneer of electronically extended percussion, in a drum quartet that also featured Paul Lovens and Jacques Widmer, but Müller's own investigations were well underway before he heard Lytton's playing.

In BTM2, all traces of conventional percussion repertoire have been dissolved into a teasing collective interplay. It's a music of provisional definitions and melting identities. "It's always exciting to listen to how the acoustic volcans can mix with the electronic sounds, so you can't tell if they are from an acoustic or electronic source. Then again, they can create contrasts, especially when playing in a wild and virtuosic way. I like that tension." In still more insistently electronic contexts, such as his super-subtle work with Sachiko M and Otomo Yoshihide on *Filament 2* (1998), or in the group *poire_2*, formed with low-grade everyday electronics duo Voice Crack and turntablist Erik M, Müller similarly blends in and exploits the potential of acoustic components of his drum set for creating contrasts.

With a bricoleur's resourcefulness and adaptability, he

unnatural selection

has augmented his basic kit for exploratory purposes, while paring it down to meet the practicalities of performance and travelling. At present he uses two headphones as microphones ("they're better in my hands and I can put them on the head of the drums"), with two volume pedals, two delays and two equalisers. A computer plays prerecorded loops with which his live electronics interact, and recently two Minidisc players have been added. There is genuine symbiosis between the acoustic and electronic parts of his set. "Often there are acoustic and electronic sounds at the same time, I play a cymbal and I pick up its sound with the headphone, varying the distance, feed it into the delay, pitchshift it, and play both sounds together. Or I play a single note on the floor tom, hold the headphone a small distance from the head of the drum to get feedback that I can control by moving the headphone, by the volume pedals, or by a pedal on the floor tom which changes the tension and alters its sound." In effect, he plays a single instrument whose range extends from unalloyed acoustic drumbeat to computer-generated noise, and he has consciously sought to work with all the possibilities ranged along that continuum.

Characteristically, Müller avoids being restricted by the configuration of his kit: "At the moment I'm often played with just a snare on my left, a floor tom on my right, and a cymbal between them. I change the acoustic elements regularly so that I'm forced to learn new ways to play, and this gives me new ideas. It enables me to avoid automatic movements. Playing drums is a wonderful thing, but if you get used to fast sequences of automatic movements it becomes hard to really make music, rather than winding off your ticks all the time." His sensitivity to the implications of basic spatial relationships is also manifested in his approach to ensemble organisation, where unconventional spacing opens up the collective sound.

His longstanding trio Nachtluft, with Andres Bosshard on tapes and computer, and Jacques Widmer on acoustic drums, deliberately plays "in different positions of an environment, the audience between us, never on stage. Space and architecture are taken to be elements of the performing process." The group has made music in a variety of environments, "in the Swiss Alps using a dam as a sound reflector, in churches, natural caves, rivers, woods, and other outside sites." Larger soundscape projects have involved guest musicians. In June 1990, Müller created an acoustic connection between a railway viaduct in Bern and the exhibition hall of the city's Museum of Art. The resultant experiment in long distance orchestration is commemorated on the CD *Klangbrücke Bern*.

Still more ambitiously, in the following year he established a satellite link joining musicians located in a town in Switzerland, on a mountaintop in the Alps and in the Hall of Science in New York. The recording has been issued as *Telefonia — A Transatlantic Performance*. Amongst the players augmenting the Nachtluft core on the first soundscape were trombonist Conrad Bauer and vocalists Dora Schürch and Daniel Mouton. Korean komungo player Jin Hi Kim, electronics composer Ron Kuwila, and drummer Paul Lovans contributed to the second. Both featured violinist Phil Wachsmann, with whom Müller first recorded in 1985, and (more surprisingly perhaps) Butch Morris on cornet. Müller met Morris through turntable maestro Christian Marclay, who in 1989 arranged a spatially disjunctive performance on different levels of an old villa in Bern, and invited both musicians to join him. The meeting led Müller into another testing playing context, as a participant in Morris's directed improvisation sessions, or 'conductors'. Further meetings with Marclay resulted in an album of live and frenetic duets, issued by Müller in 1994. Müller finds any musical context congenial that allows for

surprise, but is alert to the danger that in improvised music highly individual voices and personalised techniques may become lethargic. "In the end, when a musician knows that an audience comes to his concert expecting to see special tricks, the concert becomes a kind of cabaret and has only little to do with music." The members of Nachtluft are wary of repeating formulas and "blindly following one another." Setting traps to catch one another out is integral to the discipline that keeps their music alive. Some of Müller's most impressive work has been with Jim O'Rourke, who takes comparable pains to avoid clichés. They have made two arresting records: *Slow Motion* (1994), with O'Rourke on guitar, and *Weighting* (1998), where he turns to keyboards, lap steel and electronics. The duo have also teamed up with Voce Crack on the intense and grappy *Table Chant And Handstand* (1996). At a Victrola concert last year O'Rourke played just a G3 computer, while Müller concentrated mainly on Minidisc player. Müller was aware of audience uneasiness at the subdued visual aspect. "It was argued that you couldn't see what was going on, and there was no reason for a concert, you could just play a record. I think there is a big misunderstanding there between music and show. In the end, it is a question of audience perception; it is the music that counts, or is it the action? Everybody going to a concert has to supply their own answer."

Müller, meanwhile, continues moving in sound. Forthcoming albums include a third with O'Rourke, a duo with guitarist Taku Sugimoto, and a trio with Sugimoto and AMM's Keith Rowe. This month, pore 2 appear at the Takdis Festival in Switzerland, where Müller will also perform with Lee Ranaldo and David Watson. And four CDs are scheduled for issue by For 4 Ears in 2000. "You take one step," concludes Müller, "and you find another position for your ears." □ For 4 Ears Website: www.datacomm.ch/jgm/for4ears

PHOTOS: BARBARA REICHES MÜLLER

Four eared wonder: Günter Müller



global ear

Tromsø

"Did you see the sun?" asks Biosphere's Geir Jørgensen, peering at the early afternoon's twilight sky. It's the cusp between January and February and the sun is only beginning to edge its way over the horizon in Jørgensen's home town of Tromsø, Norway, 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle.

Outside Tromsø's smart Kulturhuset (Culture House), Jørgensen and British sound sculptor Jony Easterby are making snowballs. In front, two A-frames hung with reflective steel sheets comprise Jørgensen's *Fluogate*, an interactive sound installation, which is turning out to be the surprise hit of the town's annual Nordlys Festivalen (Northern Lights Festival). Fur-coated elderly women with grandchildren in brightly coloured snowsuits are throwing snowballs at these spire-shaped structures, triggering samples of more or less atonal Ambient soundwash and smuggled found sound fragments — a car door closing, a high speed train rushing past — which fill the town square. Each sheet is connected to a velocity sensor which in turn is linked to a sampler Jørgensen has built in a timer loop which alternates through a range of nine programs, changing every five minutes or so. He has also added a second stream of sound, a constant drone which appears in the mix as the sound melee fades away.

The pair have also borrowed a magnetometer from the local university to monitor the Aurora Borealis. The Borealis becomes active when it swings away from its usual northerly position, and in turn the pitch of the instrument changes, adding another soundstream to the installation.

A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month . . .

Easterby has been involved with these sorts of environmentally sensitive installations for years. He's pleased with the result, and emphasises how it is a project anybody can get into, as the sounds aren't loaded with any particular cultural baggage. Certainly the population of Tromsø appreciates its two wooden spires, and during most of its four day installation it is in constant use.

The sculpture has become another episode in the evolution of Tromsø's music scene. Way back in the early 80s, Jørgensen used to order obscure records from Touch for his locally run mail order service. He later joined the successful vocal group Bell Canto, before the desire to make his own music led him to releasing the



first in a series of CDs as Biosphere, thus putting Tromsø on the musical map. That first CD, 1992's *Microgravity* (on the Belgian R&S label), set in motion a veritable avalanche of Techno and Ambient releases from the 'Gateway to the North Pole'. Bjørn Torske, Ole Johan Mjøs, Rune Lindbæk, Aedena Cycle, plus offshoots Raykissopp and Drum Island, all followed Biosphere into the brave new digital world.

Apart from Bjørn Torske's influential radio station, the main radio programme was Vidar Hansen's show which concentrated on electronic music. In 1994, after broadcasting for ten years, Hansen started Beatservice, the primary label for Norwegian dance

and Ambient music. Now, Beatservice is one of a number of Norwegian independent electronic labels, including Oslo's Origo Sound and Ruge Grammaton, whose challenging music is making an impact beyond Norway's borders. In 1999 Hansen celebrated his label's first five years with a busy schedule of releases including his second Arctic Circle compilation, a Biosphere remix CD, a new album from Stereolink, and the oceanic, interior driftworks of Circular's Divergent. There's also a new Aedena Cycle offering, *Cave Cult* — an affecting mix of taut and mellow electronic skills.

Remote and close to the apex of Norway's spiny topography, Tromsø is not only far away from any of the accepted centres of the world, it's even peripheral in the



Nordic mind, so the emergence of the town's electronic music scene bemuses many. Aedena Cycle's Geirte Børlandhus points out how people in Tromsø 'realised that we didn't just do what people do in urban cities because it wouldn't be the same. We had to do our own interpretation. It's to do with where we are, but also with who we are. This isn't urban society. We don't have a club culture. There are no concerts. We have some small bars where everything that happens, happens. The way we relate to music is different to people in big cities, where most of the electronic music comes from. So I think it's very natural for people here to do their own interpretation of this urban music. It's not a big town in the context of the rest of the world. People here know it. That's why they maybe act a little bit different. They don't think they are the centre of the world.'

It's hard not to view the emergence of the Tromsø scene as a reflection of the dramatic terrain and mountainous horizon where the musicians find themselves. Set alongside a breathtaking fjord and surrounded by peaks, Tromsø's awe-inspiring landscape provides a commanding backdrop to the region's glacial electronica. Although a marketing cliché, there's truth in the picture of 'these guys sitting in complete darkness, with these fields of snow, working on their computers alone', as Rune Grammaton boss Rune Kristoffersen, an Oslo resident, remarks. Indeed, Hansen tells me Biosphere's music is the only thing he'll put on his Walkman to soundtrack the ghostly Northern Lights displays. In Tromsø, the 'Arctic Circle scene' has discovered a soundtrack for the roof of the world.

OLIVER LOWENSTEIN

Biosphere and Jony Easterby's *Fluogate* installation at Tromsø's Northern Lights Festival



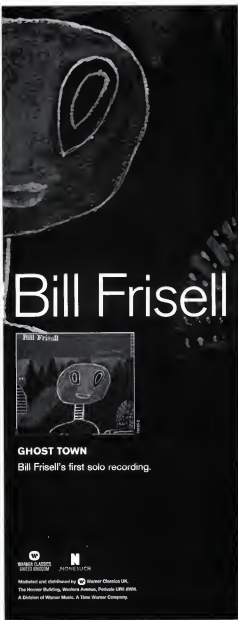
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Morton Subotnick's synthesizer voyages raised one of electronic music's enduring space age masterpieces, *Silver Apples Of The Moon*. Since entering the MIDI age, he's still pushing for the outer reaches of electronica. Words: Richard Henderson. Photos: Melanie Grizzel

unlocking the volt

The crowd in San Francisco's Aquarius record store is spilling out the door of the tiny shop and onto the pavement. Inside, at the centre of a few feet of space cleared by reverent admirers stands Morton Subotnick, greybearded and congenial. He addresses the Powerbook resting before him on the counter, with a rapid movement of the computer's mouse he sends gurgling electronic tones shaking around the shop's periphery. Another, slower gesture with the mouse creates a series of sustaining Ambient tones.

Subotnick's audience hangs on his every word and listens in rapt silence to the vibrant timbres coaxed from his Mac. They are a varied bunch: older, shaggy, serious music freaks — brandishing first edition vinyl copies of Subotnick albums such as *Touch* and *Salewater* — mixing with decidedly younger adherents of electronica. The latter are busy catching up on Subotnick after hearing him alongside efforts by Cage, Xenakis, Ussachevsky, Luc Ferrari and other pioneering spirits on *Early Modulations*. Vintage Volts, the recent compilation of seminal electronic works (with sleeve notes by The Wire's Rob Young), released on the New York Caprihorn label.

The Aquarius event is not unique in his recent experience, either. "I did this at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] recently," he tells me later. "I go to MIT relatively often, I have something like a standing invitation — where the theatre seats several hundred people. Usually in the afternoon the Media Lab people come down to listen to me, we're taking 40 or 50 people on the average turning out for my talk. This time I went, the place was jammed. It's a younger crowd, it's the same everywhere. It's really started to pick up in the last three or four months, this upsurge of people with [my] vinyl records. Some of the copies look brand new! I've seen them where the shrinkwrap hasn't been broken, I don't know where they're getting them," he laughs.

His affable nature and the economy of his speech are clues to the years spent



lecturing in the prestigious halls of MIT and the California Institute for the Arts. He can't disguise the zeal with which he approaches a technological challenge, yet he knows instinctively when to lighten an academic point with humour. Speaking of his latest creation, *Gestures*, which he has been demonstrating on the Powerbook, Subotnick describes learning necessary Mac applications such as Director and Shockwave from scratch. "I had black hair until a few weeks ago," he deadpans.

That Subotnick should find himself surrounded by kids raised on illiberty and drum 'n' bass is curious in itself — he admits later that he didn't know what an "in-store" was until making a similar appearance at Manhattan's taste-making *Other Music* shop. In the minds of many, he is still principally associated with his 1967 work, *Silver Apples Of The Moon*, its title drawn from the famous stanza by William Butler Yeats. *Silver Apples* was the first all-electronic composition to be commissioned by a major record company (Nonesuch). It turned into something like a hit. Subotnick describes the experience of seeing his album riding high on the Billboard classical chart for several months in the late 60s, he recalls thinking at the time "Maybe I can buy a car!" Later, upon receiving his first royalty cheque — for \$2000 — he learned that the charts were determined entirely by orders placed from three classical stores. Of the current revival of interest in *Silver Apples*, Subotnick notes that the work "had a large audience back then, though it was basically known in the Fine Arts world. If I had done a lecture tour then, it would have been limited strictly to universities."

There is historical significance in catching up with the peripatetic composer in San Francisco. Normally he divides his time between New York and Santa Fe, New Mexico, with time allotted for his teaching post at CalArts near Los Angeles. Subotnick had gone to graduate school at Mills College, across the bay in Oakland, and stayed on and taught, at first part time, then full time for a couple of years. He then gravitated to San



Francisco at the beginning of the 60s, where he and composer Ramon Sender established the Tape Center, which soon became a focus of artistic cross-pollination, attracting film makers, performance artists and visual artists of all stripes, in addition to those musicians who shared the electro enthusiasms of Subotnick and Sender. "Pauline Oliveros joined us [See *The Wire* 164], then [synth inventor] Don Buchla came on board," Subotnick remembers. The Tape Center was the perfect springboard for Subotnick's multimedia ambitions, which were well defined even by that early date: "In 1961, I did my defining multimedia piece in San Francisco," he recalls. "That didn't come later, it started early, and that's what I wanted to do. It became so much, though, that I broke off and thought, 'I'm going to do electronics for a while, then I'm going to bring instruments into it, then I'm going to work with visuals, then I'm going to put this piece together,' which I saw as taking seven or eight years, but in actual fact took me 30."

Happenings and large scale phantasmagorical projects sprang up from the fertile ground of the Tape Center. Subotnick recalls *Cityscape*, directed by Ken Dewey, an event which took place all across the city over the course of several hours. "We transported the audience from place to place in buses, trucks and cars. One event took place on an overpass, where you could see the entrance and exit of a tunnel with cars coming in and out. We had several cars with gels on their headlights and special horns, they'd blink their lights in specific ways and add to the situation in the tunnel." A visual artist of Subotnick's acquaintance, Lee Romero, had been experimenting in his flat with coloured fluids in Pyrex bowls, whose undulating shapes were magnified by an overhead projector. Voila! The light show was born. "The pop world hadn't experienced those as yet, light shows came to the Filmore from the Tape Center," he asserts.

"I started using the light show technique," Subotnick continues, "with Lee Romero at first and later the visual artist Tony Martin, in 1962. My first multimedia piece was in 61 and then the light show came in the following year. I was trying to create a new kind of public art — not public in the sense of a 'city' piece, but differentiated from the 'private' art of the recording, which I thought belonged in the living room."

Once the Psychedelic Era kicked in, the race was on to enhance the discotheque experience for the benefit of the clubs' chemically stimulated clientele. A pair of entrepreneurs had a name, Electric Circus, but not much more than that. They had been told that Subotnick was the guy who knew how an Electric Circus would look and sound. And he did. "When I got to New York [in the mid-60s], I choreographed multimedia evenings at the Electric Circus. I brought Tony out to New York as well. By this time he had done light shows for Jefferson Airplane and all the light work for my pieces. Don Buchla designed the technology for the Electric Circus, Tony did the lights

and I created the electronic music, which alternated with rock music in that environment in the beginning. The original idea for the

Electric Circus was that the evening would be choreographed. It wasn't just about dancing, it was two thirds dancing and one third pieces of music, all with lights. The whole area would be purple and then suddenly a green light would shine on a fire eater. The dancing would stop and there would be electronic music and a person on a tightrope would come across. Then strobe lights would blast the room back into dancing music again. It was a choreographed three or four hour evening. We had a series called The Electric Ear, which featured electronic art music, but staged. We even did Milton Babbitt and Mel Powell, people who ordinarily wouldn't have been in that kind of situation. It was pretty lively."

Eventually, after a year of such eclectic presentations, Subotnick remembers, "The owners became nervous about their patrons not dancing. They'd come up to the booth and put on dance records. We had done a production at Carnegie Hall called *The Electric Christmas*, which sold out two nights and was incredibly successful. I quit shortly after that; the Electric Circus basically became a discotheque with lights."

At the while, Subotnick laboured on his own compositions, searching for a new medium that would integrate with the novel, electric atmosphere of the 60s. "One idea that was in the air at the time was one that began in the late 50s, continuing through the 60s into the early 70s, which was to have [recorded] music that wouldn't sound the same way twice. Probably one of the most influential pieces which exemplified this notion was Earle Brown's *Available Forms*, from around 1960 or 1961. A lot of people were trying to find pieces that were not a narrative form but were pieces that existed for the moment and would be different in the next performance. *HPSCHD* [the John Cage and Lejaren Hiller album, each copy of which contained unique instructions for manipulating the tone controls on the listener's stereo] did that with a recording."

"To some extent," he suggests, "I'm sure that my ideas — because they were formed during that period — were similar. My aesthetic was not so much to make a piece that would be different each time. I really was dealing with a narrative in this new chamber music, which was only listened to in the home, which was never intended to be performed and, further, didn't have an object correlative — there was nothing out there that this was a recording of. It existed only on the record, and you listened to it as such." So it was that *Silver Apples Of The Moon* and later electronic works — *The Wild Bull* (1968), *Touch* (1970) and *Schneider* (1971) — were conceived in two sections whose lengths each reflected the storage capacity of a 33 1/3 rpm long player.

Beginning a self-renewing creative pattern that would continue to the present, Subotnick then conceived of a variation on this thought: "A piece that existed in your home as well, that would have the same quality, except that you'd be able to participate in it by reinterpreting it," he explains. "The Cage and Hiller record was very similar, but I think that there was a fine distinction in that the word 'interpretation' would be an incorrect word to use with Cage's music. It was not intended to be interpreted, it was intended to be a different piece each time." Tracing this impulse forward in time to his latest work, *Gestures*, Subotnick amplifies his point. "My ambition along that line, which I didn't have the technology to realise until now, would be the same piece performed each time but with simulated different orchestras and different string quartets and different conductors playing that piece, so that you would have a different interpretation. Because of the technology, that interpretation goes so far as to almost become another piece, because the participating listener would have that much freedom to reinterpret it."

Comparing the real-time reconfigured music of *Gestures* to the analogue abstractions of *Silver Apples* yields the thought that the past is never far away in Morton Subotnick's purview, indeed, that his latest efforts are but another instalment of a well-considered musical continuum. He has been prolific throughout the past three decades, combining a steady flow of compositions for both electronics and acoustic instrumentation with a career in academia and a bent for technological innovation which began in the early 60s. Then, Subotnick served as technical consultant for the first generations of synthesizers developed by Don Buchla which would bear the latter's name. The revolutionary design of those devices, with their flat, pressure-sensitive keypads capable of controlling the panning, pulse width and amplitude of the notes they generated, defined the swooping, modulating, otherworldly sounds of *Silver Apples*. Today, although Subotnick uses virtual synthesis created in software for his Macintosh-generated orchestrations, his timbral palette still evokes a time when analogue synthesis opened seemingly unlimited frontiers in modern music.

"Buchla's boxes were pretty remarkable to begin with," Subotnick remembers. "When Ramon and I were working with Don on developing the electronic instrument, it was already a notion of mine that space was an important ingredient, both in an auditioning

where you could use surround sound, and in the home where you could use stereo. So, right from the beginning with Buchla's gear, there were voltage-controlled panning modules — quadruphonic panning modules — built into the unit in the beginning, in 1964." For all of Buchla's innovations, though, Subotnick's means of production were entirely spartan. "Since I only had two stereo tape recorders, one of which was only a playback unit, and everything had to be overdubbed, I would play live, mixed alongside the tape input, from my last take. You can imagine, over the span of 13 months, just how much overdubbing was involved with that piece."

Describing his initial attempts to imbue his compositions with a spatial component, Subotnick points out, "Buchla's stuff had little spring reverb in it, which were only of limited application for recording, like guitar amp technology. I couldn't afford plates or live chambers when I did *Silver Apples*, people think there's reverb there, but there wasn't. That illusion of space came principally from the way that I dealt with individual timbres, the decay on a particular envelope. Columbia-Princeton [America's first official electronic music studio] had big steel plate reverbs. When I got my contract with Columbia Records in 1970, we recorded *Touch* there. They used a big room in the basement of CBS recording studios for live chamber reverb. Someone else sent sound into the reverb — we had to redo it because we had someone else's music in my reverb!

"When I was trying to identify what it was that I was doing in the late 60s," Subotnick



notes, "I used the term 'Sculpting with sound, on a canvas of time and space.' Space became a very important parameter, equal to and, in the case of some of the electronic pieces more important than the idea of melody. I tended to shy away from melody as time went on, not with my instrumental works, but with the electronic works." The *Gestures* piece that you heard has fragments of melody, but nothing that stands out as melodic treatment. It's more about texture and space and that's my most recent work. I've carried that concern over into the instrumental music as well."

As the 70s began, Morton Subotnick was part of the illustrious start-up team which inaugurated the California Institute for the Arts, or CalArts as it is popularly known. "Mel Powell and I were the Dean and Associate Dean, respectively, of the Music School being one of five schools which comprised CalArts. At the beginning, we had [teachers like] Harold Budd, Jim Tenney, Nam June Paik, it was an incredible faculty!" Characterizing the school's unique curriculum, he allows that "we made a very clear what the school stood for, which was epitomized by the faculty, the school was who the faculty was. At the time, the general notion was that anyone could come to the school, but they needed to know what they were coming for. It was up to the students to discuss what they wanted to do and we, the faculty, as more experienced figures, could suggest ways that might enable them to get to the place that they had envisioned with their work."

"We had classes prepared," he continues, "which we would have dumped if they weren't the right classes, but we were pretty sure that the curriculum was correct in most cases. We wanted the students to participate and understand why they were taking these classes. It represented fairly open and successful education for 1970 or '71. There was a mix between the notion of an education and an apprenticeship, the

original idea being that the students were going to be apprentices. As the years went on, it became more of an educational institution than a guild with apprentices. Even today, though, I think it's one of the more open and interesting art schools in the world, even though it's not as wild and open as in the early days. Probably that openness wouldn't work as much today. Young people who were coming to work at the school then had a different background than the ones who attend CalArts now. There's a much more deliberate, thoughtful approach to what one wants to learn today than there was in those days."

Among Subotnick's students in CalArts's first semester was Carl Stone, who would later achieve renown as an electroacoustic composer. "I wasn't officially a student," says Stone of his initial status there. "I just went and took all the classes and signed up for [recording] studio time. Morton knew that I wasn't a student but he didn't want to be arbitrary about it. He let me use the studio along with 60 other people who had the same privileges. By the end of the year, the decision had been made to radically cut back on studio usage because the place, frankly, was being totally trashed. They cut the [studio uses] down from 60 to ten. I made the cut."

Stone remembers Subotnick as "a really good teacher, with a great analytical mind. He taught really new ways to listen to music. He would sit you down with a piece of music from the classical repertoire or Ligeti or Xenakis and try to figure out new ways to listen to that stuff. It was always interesting. His teaching style was a blend of analysis, anecdote, Freud and everything in between, very stimulating. When I started working with him, he was working on *Touch*, which was his third LP. He had all but disowned the first two. I guess once he had written them, he had lost interest in *Silver Apples* and especially *The Wild Bull* by the time he was working on *Touch*. I think that *Touch* is his masterpiece. *Silver Apples* is a great work, but *Touch* is the one. His relationship with that piece was different, it was more developed than the earlier work."

In the late '70s and through the '80s, Subotnick came closer to realizing his multimedia desires spanning two decades earlier. He devised the "Ghost Box," a means of processing the sounds of live performers by registering gestural energy in the form of control voltages, which in turn would control envelope followers through which the acoustic performers would be processed. The voltages were stored at first on tape, then later on E-PROM (Erasable Programmable ROM) chips, facilitating accurate renditions of the composer's gestures as a compositional adjunct in future performances.

A significant and recurring performer in Subotnick's staged work is a vocalist used to working with electronic processing, Joan La Barbara. "We're married, you know," the composer adds. "She's the soloist in my multimedia pieces, starting with the piece I did for the Olympics in 1984, *The Double Life Of Amphibians*. Lee Breuer [of the Mabou Mines theatre troupe] directed it and she was the soloist. Incidentally, Breuer did his first original work at the Tape Center." *Jacob's Room* was Subotnick's third or fourth attempt at a large scale multimedia piece, which premiered in 1993. He describes the work as a "monodrama, a Holocaust opera comprising a composite libretto: some of which Subotnick wrote and some of which are taken from existing texts."

The texts of Surrealist Max Ernst inspired a trilogy of Subotnick pieces: his *Imaginary Boilers: The Key To Songs* (released on New Albion), *And The Butterflies Begin To Sing* (New World) and *All My Hummingbirds Have Albinos*. The composer indicates, "They are live pieces with computer assist. I developed interactive, MIDI based software with Mark



Ringmaster at the Electric Circus, mid-80s

Coniglio, an ex-student of mine, software which predates MAX. The reason that I developed it was to be able to have people on the stage not have to follow computers, but rather to have the computer follow the musicians. The computer knows the pianist is playing 32nd notes and it knows her tempo because it's following her tempo. If she keeps her finger off, so that another note doesn't come down when it's expected to come down, the computer takes the last note she played and applies it to a MIDI piano sound and sends that sound back and forth across the proscenium and will keep doing it until she plays her next note."

Subotnick's work in the MIDI age is characterized by elements of timbral versatility, with recognizable piano and mallet instrument sounds, though "invisibly tweaked out a bit," as Carl Stone notes. Subotnick himself observes that "in the analogue [synthesis] age, I had a particular palette. I moved from there to the acoustic instruments for my staged pieces. I wanted to see what instruments could do onstage, and created the Ghost Box scores. I'm sure that I was influenced by MIDI in the '80s, but my intentions were to work with instruments at that point. The new work [*Gestures*] is much closer to the old electronic work. That's because I'm back in the living room arena, sculpting with sound again."

He is also creating novel means of musical access for children. His *Making Music: CO-ROM* (available from Voyager) appeared in the mid-90s, to date it has sold more than 500,000 copies, has been issued in 12 languages and has spawned a sequel, *Making More Music*. Instead of creating a third instalment on disc, Subotnick immersed himself in Web technology and recently launched his own site

(www.creatingmusic.com/), complete with cartoon portraits of its author. "Passing music down wasn't enough to me," says Subotnick. "I wanted to try to find ways to bring technology and music and my thoughts together and give something to children. The site's been up for about five months and has between 5000 and 6000 kids each month. There's no advertising, just word of mouth."

During the question period after his *Aquarius* demonstration, Subotnick is asked which composers influenced his landmark work. None, he replies, recalling that he worked on *Silver Apples* in a kind of vacuum, without a stylistic precedent in mind. A moment later, he pauses and cites Charles Ives, not for the latter's compositions themselves but for that uniquely Ivesian experience, where floating shards of melody and rhythm slowly coalesce into recognizable form as time progresses. Later, Subotnick would add that "I don't set out with a formal plan [for the electronic compositions]. I'm in my studio and I play. That's how it works. I'm working and things begin to appear. I let that happen. I don't keep that developmental aspect from the piece. It becomes part of the piece. As I do that for longer periods, I'll begin to apply a more stringent, formal approach as I begin to hear what I've done and understand it better."

"It's a part of my own process," he concludes, "just allowing myself the freedom of just being, and things begin to happen. I like the idea that when you listen to it, that's what you get, that very same sense of evolving music. The sense of my discovering what it is that I'm doing still emerges as part of the music. It's a kind of eker, so to speak, of the process — which is not a formal process. It's a discovery process, where every day is a discovery." *"Silver Apples Of The Moon: The Wild Bull, Touch and most of the works mentioned above are out on CD through Wergo. Early Modulations: Vintage Voic is out now on Capricorn.*

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england's dreaming

Now living by the sea, **Coil** tap the tidal flows and lunar tugs shaping England's occult history for their visionary nocturnal music. Words: Ian Penman. Photography: Dean Belcher



John Balance by the Bristol Channel, 2000

The great angel Uriel appeared to 16th-century English mystic John Dee as he knelt in prayer in a leafy glade, a similar apparition visited Coil's John Balance one night in what he calls his "disco revelation." "There was this really hardcore Acid House club — it was after hours, it was about four or six in the morning, and by then people were just completely out of it. I went there with Marc Almond and we'd taken ecstasy and acid and in the midst of it all, literally an angel appeared on the dancefloor with this huge great lectern and this huge Biblical burning book and showed me all these things — and I thought: oh no, I'm supposed to be grooving in this nightclub and I'm having this apocalyptic revelation."

The inconvenient astral guest is memorialised in "Tiny Golden Books", the second track on the second volume of Coil's *Musick To Play In The Dark*. Personally, I have no trouble with a dancefloor as the venue for epiphanies — fearsome or otherwise. Angels with a yen for the night life? This is Coil, after all.

Of late, Coil — Balance and long-term partner Peter Christopherson, plus a moveable contingent of accomplices — have moved away from London's dead disco centre city to the wild tiddi periphery, and their new music is awash with tracks of the Wessex slopes where they've made their home. Sky and silence for a time, in place of their old penitent's diet of speed and crashland cock and burn. As Balance records on the meditative "Paranoid Inlay," "Dear Diary: What do I need to give up? Crystalline ladders, shiny things, mirror balls." Coil have left the CCTV Necropolis, whistled away to the water's edge, looking at the big sky, listening to the stone tapes, adrift for total action. Looking for the midnight sun, the gold within. It's been a year now since Balance and Christopherson relocated, and the move is marked (either side) by a positive apocalypse of new Coil sides: four *Solstice/Equinox* EPs, two volumes of *Musick To Play In The Dark*, the hypnotic *Astral Disaster*, plus live work with the resuscitated Time Machines project. A liminal moment, then, between old ways and new conditions. Coil light up this grey zone, and invite us in. This is Coil, after dark.

John Balance was 21 in 1983, when Coil began (as a solo performance in collaboration with the group Zos Kia, as commemorated on the *Transpound* CD). It is now a record of his life entire: a workbook of his curiosities, a polytonal account of his and Christopherson's life together, and a chronicle of wider trajectories, taking in outsider sex, magical practice and musical experiment.

It begins with hymned shit — an anti-Oedipal cruise through Pasolini's outskirts, De Sade's 'sudden abyss', open air fucks, tanned brown skin and cathedrals in flames, moves into a jitter of cathartic MDMA sensuality — Balance and Christopherson as an Edipal Verlaine and Rimbaud roiling through London's arches, cellars and parks, and then spins off into a thousand golden threads — invocations, pseudonyms and call signs, successive creations of a perpetual Mutation, some disappearing into others, vicissitudes of a matter that 'merely changes form' (This whole history covered with supernatural economy by David Keenan in *The Wire* 175.)

If you had a mind to, you might map the moves Coil made (and, more crucially, didn't) in order to secure the autonomy they own today. In their total embrace of 'alternative' ways and means — an electrical resistance both practical and metaphysical — they represent everything that a certain post-punk moment promised but never delivered. Will and palette in place of back talk and retreat. The combination of Balance's occult intuition and Christopherson's alchemical intelligence (a doubtless facile spin) makes for music of ravishing physicality and sometimes unnerving gentleness. Coil strumline Tradition, to carve out new traditions. This is mined music. This is Coil, in two minds.

The tide is a distant memory and the sky slits when I arrive to talk to Balance in the West Country pile which trebles as hearth, HQ and studio for Coil. Christopherson (fondly called 'Sleazy' by all) is on a different West Coast today, fugitive in Los Angeles, wearing his video director's hat, a lucrative sideline that paradoxically ensures Coil aren't in hock to corporate pop's Capital. *By working the soil, you cultivate the sky*: a balance bought with hard barter. (Tell me that making a video for Henry Rollins in Calcutta isn't working hard for your money.)

It takes two sides to make a Balance — and while he refuses to disown the vampyric John of 'old', the Balance before us is one whose most treasured estate is the silence of their new home and garden. This sturdy sanctuary sits on a veritable nest edge of a cliff,

a mare's nest halfway between beach and branch, hanging in the air, abutting a wood of oaks, a real threshold house. Balance has come to revere the "parliament of birds" (as he calls them) who ring the trees, strut and chatter, keeping bouncer vigil on itinerants. "It's like gang warfare — the crows at the back have their territory and their business and keep the seagulls away." Inside, the expected titles by Burroughs and catalogues of alt culture nestle alongside *Silver Tree* in Britain and Julian Cope's *The Modern Antiquarian*. Col's chakras may remain partly in the gutter, but Balance's heart is shimmering naked in the branches, on the beach, in the lowering dawn. This is a liminal him

"It's always preoccupied me." Balance is speaking about Col's new 'lunar' aspect. But he only just started taking stock of it.

In each beginning is also an end, and maybe there isn't a total break between Cols old and new. Rather, a circular or spiral course, a perpetual limbo that curves in past itself, to touch older points again with energies anew. Their 'new' sound may be more belm than drang — music with cloud in its eyes — but as Balance says, "you can detect it on *Scatology* [1984]" even if it's become more overt in the last three years.

"The overall Col symbol was the black sun," he says, "and we've deliberately decided to go from solar to lunar aspect. We just decided to become completely open to whatever happens, make more reflective music. It seems a logical step — moon music."

That is, if a step into the mystic can ever be "logical". But there are tangible differences between then and now. He mentions his and Christopher's early connections to *Thrilling Gristle* and *Psychic TV*, which some found outgrowing, and admits that much of the 'industrial' era aesthetic had a portendy macabre cast, "very much to do with symbols and playing around with them." Every symbol is an invocation, as Yeats wrote, and lately — deep breath, eyes shut — the mood is more of a letting go, falling backward into the waves. All this watery action is too amorphous to demarcate. It had already begun in London, under the river.

"When we lived in Chiswick," recalls Balance, "we were just one street away from the Thames. Because we lived down by the Thames and we'd take the dogs down there every day, we realised how tidal it was — an incredibly tidal river — and we just became obsessed by the ebb and flow of the river and how it changes."

This 'ebb and flow' is also historical. Col's Thames is not a Mandelstam-pimped millennial Bride, neutralised by the Dome's ersatz "enlightenment, but a dark corridor telescoping back in time, lapping against John Dee's hem, out, in again, onto Ian Sinclair's much traveled soles. A Thames of older labours and commerce, an alchemical scar, a Lambeth Nile, a screaming vein. Water as a pit for suicides or a balm for baptisms. An ear into the aether, whose turbid lure speaks to troubled souls in our own loud self.

Col's last London breath was *Astral Disorder*, "recorded in two days at Samhain 1998, in the Ancient Borough of Southwark." Samhain is the Celtic word for what we now call Halloween — a time when the threshold between the human and supernatural worlds is thought to be wide open. This is reflective music, sidereal waves throwing undulatory light against brick and metal. A feeling of sound washed ashore.

Col are equally at home in lyric text and synthesized texture, closing the gap that still often separates vox and electronica — a gap which in itself seems (illegibly?) to symbolise an extant split between materialism and the spirit. The songs on the two volumes of *Musick To Play In The Dark* are by turns rapt, troubling, and strangely sincere. Positively uncanny (especially "Broccoli") which quietly crackles with what could be other-side code or hearthside flames), chillingly beautiful ("Bewings a Liminal Hymn") and surprisingly reminiscent of another coastal dweller: Robert Wyatt. ("Yes," says Balance, deflecting the compliment, "Rock Bottom being perhaps the most lunar album ever made.")

Col's hermetic soul music exists on a different plane from more formatted electronica (More wave and cup than click and oct). All Col's 'channels' are open — to catch night time whispers and departed ghost boys, etherised minds adrift between last breath and imminent shapeshift. This is music to play in place of drugs: the Escher-sketch shiver of

"Ether", the aquamarine De Quincey drift of "MU-UR", the vertical take off of *Time Machines*, the disembodied (story of *Musick* — Volume 1 of the latter was the first thing they did in the new in-house studio. Has the relocation seeped into their work?

"Very much so," confirms Balance. "We were looking for a house to move to for about a year and we just wanted to be by the sea. This place was the last place we looked at — the very last house. We just saw the sea and we thought, 'that's it.'" He gestures through the window to 180 degrees of sea-sky, a Rotkorn mural for free. "You can see the sun rise and set, you can see the moon come right around, you can see it all."

Is their music played in the dark?

"We used to — but that was the old drugs and stimulants keeping you up." He laughs ruefully. "Now we get up really early. I prefer to work in the morning." As if some as a shock to their more Gothically inclined fans, these nocturnal dark-soaked songs are mostly recorded in the bright and early moon on a diet of nettle tea and organic produce. Which is not meant to make their 'darkness' sound vaguely rabble if anything, the achievement is more impressive, and a more complex matter. As though Col now carry the appropriate molecules within, to be accessed or censored at will.

"We'd decided that we were making 'moon music' and we said 'OK, let's not be scared of exploring things that we've denied in our music before. Because the 80s was all metal bashing and sampled chaos and everyone tied up in leather' — a beady laugh — "and all that urban decay stuff. I thought, 'we've done that, been there."

"It sounds like a huge thing to do," he continues, "but I want to make sacred music, music that heals. And that can be very noisy violent music still — our music had a lot of anger in it and still does. It's not that we've become wispy wispy — but I'm not interested in alleviating juvenile angst." Which has its place — but you move on, grow, shift priorities. "Have your wounds grown wings?" A new mouthpiece: the great star mother, in whom one must seek reabsorption. It's like *Performance* (a sly ode from which kicked off "Further Back And Faster" on 1991's *Love's Secret Doman*), where we start with the hard-armoured ultra-masculine "I, and go through the mystic sound banner to reach the chemical union at the end.

"I love Nic Roeg and Donald Cammelli's work. *Performance* has an occult resonant power that goes far beyond its rock 'n' roll status. Beautiful. Eureka,

again, that's a lost film — when that appears on DVD I'll be a very, very happy man. If we were a film I'd like to be Eureka!" We could be happy, just sitting here all day valouring our King across the waters. *Performance* and Eureka make us complicit in their magical intent: truly alchemical work. Phase shift, planet shift. We happily spon the connections. Nic Roeg-Colin Wilson, Stones-Kenneth Anger, Donald Cammelli-godchild of Aleister Crowley (Cammelli Sr was a close friend and biographer of the Magus). Col take their place in this 'marginal' tradition of Anglo-Saxon mavericks, one foot in this world and a third eye on the other. Aethereal work, by earthy people. This is continuity.

There is a Col 'family' stone too — David Tibet (Current 93), Steven Stapleton (Nurse With Wounds), Rose and Drew McDowall, Ausdrain and former Col member Stephen Throver's Cyclob, current recruits Thighpaulsandra and Simon Norris — involved in music, artwork, the bewitch and between of ideas and enthusiasm. Cultivating the voices of an older cusp: John Dee, Austin Osman Spare, Aleister Crowley, Jack Parsons. Sometimes the two streams meet, as with film maker/magus Kenneth Anger, who started as a reference point (a star in the limelight) and became a friend. "Making movies is casting spells," according to Anger — a definition you might probably apply to Col's music making. They are supposed to work with Anger on two soundtrack pieces — "one a version of a Crowley gnostic mass, also a short film about Crowley. *A Man Thru's Life To Hong*" — but this may be a recipe for astral deferral, given that both parties have a reputation for announcing works that fail to materialise.

"I do wish he'd finish some things," says Balance fondly. "He does have this problem of not being able to finish works." Col likewise have often left a perplexed fanbase



scratching its collective head, as myriad projects hang in the air like frozen hallucinations, neither fully here nor yet consigned to oblivion. Backwoods — their New Orleans album, for Trent Reznor's label — is one such. "See years old now," sighs Balance distractedly, and it's still imminent... or stilted? There's an air of evanescence when I press him further on its status (it doesn't sound as if he enjoyed his Bayou stay, but I could be wrong.) Anyway, on the bright side, things do seem to have gotten incredibly better of late.

"Oh yeah, absolutely — thank you for noticing!" he chuckles. "It's true. I drive Peter mad 'cause I set up these tensions by announcing projects, and I have absolutely every intention of finishing them. It may well be 20 years down the line, but nearly all the tales I have in these little books get used in the lyrics and I do recycle them."

Let's admit this much: there is still a vast amount we do not know about the interaction between place — musical pattern — and psyche. There are new theories that cast stone circles and shamanic caves as gigantic amplifiers and intimate microphones, responsive to certain skews of percussion and deliberately "cast" to resonate certain crucial frequencies. Sunspots provoke radio fadeout and interference. Magnetic storms sussurate in our singing, ringing skull. Aether is an undulation that transmits radio waves. Balance mentions how the occultist Austin Spare used to make and repair radio kits, and how he'd paint magical symbols on the speaker baffles, "because they were then empowered, and the transmission would be a magical transmission."

Coil are Can fans from way back, and like perhaps only Can before them their music is tied to specific stripes of seasonal idiosyncrasy, structural weather, REM pulse. This logic of cyclical spell and seasonal surgery reaches an apogee on the four *Solstice/Equinox* EPs: improvised out of chaos and piercingly beautiful, sinistral, sulphurous, serpentine, sandy, its own compound. Time signatures and strangled sighs that seem immemorially English, tapping into something behind Englishness: haunted by older voices. Coil's pastoral Song is moored in deceptively simple, gloriously inventive settings of vox. Even when the music shivers with distant echoes of Pauline Oliveros or Stockhausen, it sounds as pastoral as the hangman's daughter. Edgely hymnal, harshly hermetic folk memory dredged by modern ploughs, harvest air cut by synth sheers.

Balance says he's no aficionado of folk music per se, but admits to a love of The Watsonsons and late rusticism. Lal Watsonson in particular. "The one that Rose [McDowall] covered as part of the series, 'Christmas Now Is Drawing Near', I originally heard as a version by Lal Watsonson solo. Every time I hear it I cry, it's so pure and emotional, emotive and lunar... moon music. She's another manifestation of the Goddess."

On Musick 2, the spiderweb echoes are of other liminal birds — Robert Wyatt, John Cale, Peter Hammill, John Martyn, Nick Drake — as well as a separate input of Popol Vuh, Cluster, Tangerine Dream. Where Coil used to dare to offend, now they dare something a little different: they dare to be sincere. Obviously there are crucial differences along a spine alignment of personality, history and intent, where Wyatt et al began in a time when "singer-songwriter" was the dominant paradigm, Coil inhabit a changed and differently charged landscape: post-punk, post-Thatcher, post-Apple Mac, post-(?) AIDS. This is moon music, but it's also a mourning chorus. Music that makes you feel significantly less alone, even as it cuts a lonely path.

The Englishness I keep hearing is there some specific thing you're doing to trigger this strong feeling of familiarity?

"Well, we also feel that when we do it." He laughs a crafty craftsman's laugh. (Musicians would rather not let non-musicians in on studio lore — especially how happenstance things often are.) "But obviously we feel it strongly, we feel... strongly vague. What happens is we start doing this music and then someone'll go, 'Oh, this sounds like so and so.' "Oh really?", and then I'll listen to it — and honestly until a few years ago I hardly heard any Stockhausen or John Cage or Parmegiani. So now it's like I'm just checking

that it's OK to be where we are. It really is instinctive, instinctual, we deliberately keep a lot out. "With age, you narrow things down to a choice between what you truly revere, and... silence." "I think that our location and our age are what influence our music the most and, as you can hear," he gestures around his sacred ground, "silence. The silence in my back garden is the thing I value the most in my life at the moment."

It's also a renegotiation of being British, isn't it? A rediscovery that there is (or was) a better country than the one we thought we knew and exorcised when younger? "Oh yeah, absolutely. I don't think I'm gonna fly abroad any more. I love Thailand, say, but I want to see what is here. What we are. *Feel no shame*. Because the 80s brought shame to be British somehow. And all the British now — in a hangover from the 80s — they're all evacuating, they will only be themselves abroad, which seems really strange. There's so much here to be discovered, rediscovered, uncovered, made use of, employed... reconnected."

"The Bird-Mother restores the bones to their places and the candidate wakes as from a deep sleep" — Mircea Eliade

He cites Julian Cole as occupying a similar mindset, supplying the same mumbling wisdom applying certain arcane languages. When Balance talks of "magic" (Crowley "The Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Wif") he's on sure ground. If Coil were more archly likely rock 'n' roll, then I would doubtless be

received in some besacred den, black candles burning, tattoos on show, all the surface paraphernalia. Such dilettantism probably explains why rock's would-be dabblers have so often come to grief — why they usually emerge hurt and chastened by the experience. Stubborn ego clings on to contaminate the Work, which fails to progress any further than dark-tinged affectation.

I've met dodgy second-hand 'spirit' dealers before, ex-bruises, ex-drinkers, autodidacts who slip the protective caul one day and start hearing the car alarm's secret code, humourless, unyielding in their interpretation of 'the facts' (as they always call them). Balance isn't like that, although in print it's hard to register the flicker of ironic and reprieve that animates his conversation. To begin with, he isn't a 'convert' — this astral pulse has been inside him since adolescence when, aged 12, he started having visions and visitations, strange birds whose whisper was of love (Reference in here both Max Ernst's 'Lop Lop', and poet Mircea Eliade's Bird-of-Prey Mother, "which is like a great bird with an iron beak, hooked claws and a long tail") The young Balance also hooked up with authors and artists who promised a world where he might slough off the inherited



When we was made, Balance and Peter Christopherson, mid-90s

English shell game and join other proud deviants out on the wing.

"I honestly don't know how it came about," he says in response to my enquiry about the origin of his interest in magic, "but I've got letters from my schoolmaster when I was aged 11 saying, 'Geoffrey was becoming again obsessed with the occult and could he desert from astral projecting into other people's heads?' They tried to throw me out the teacher came up to me and said, 'If I could get you out for subversive behaviour I would, and walked away again. He knew we were up to stuff but didn't know what it was. When we were 12 me and my friend were being taught genuine occult practices — ie astral projection — by this teacher from another school, and this one boy in particular got us into real trouble because he suggested that there was something homosexual going on between the teacher and us and got him kicked out."

"And that alone made me think, well, this is obviously important stuff — I'm going to learn as much about it as I can. I can remember writing to King of the Witches Alex Sanders — I must have seen an advert in *Prediction* or something — and I wrote asking to join his coven when I was, like, 12. He wrote me a letter back saying, 'We're, very happy to have you in the coven but when you're 18...'"

An isolated, dreamy, fractured youth it's often found in biogs of the psychically rich and naturally strange. But it's still the exception (in my experience) for someone to

come early to this stuff, rather than turn to it later on, a ladder out of the wreckage after some sort of [breached] limit.

"I did have my crisis. I think it was my rebellion against the RAF and my father and my stepfather in particular, because it was so completely opposite to him: he was the most empirical, Empire-establishing, 'British Raj in India everything for the Queen!' I wasn't allowed posters, none of that, no expression at all. So the moment I discovered there were people out there like Max Ernst, Kurt Schwitters, Hans Belmer, who were doing abstract, magical painting and music and films, and I learnt that there was a subculture, I just immediately associated with it. William Burroughs — if there was one person like William Burroughs out there doing that, being openly devout, it just kept me going, 'cause I really did have a suicidal teenage rage."

Teenage Lightning + Time Machines = Love's Secret Domain

"And I took drugs, the only drugs I took back then when I was 11 or so were magic mushrooms. Until about 18 I didn't drink, I didn't do speed, I didn't do coke, any of the other things — that came later. I'd do magic mushrooms — I'd take huge amounts of magic mushrooms and that was my teaching. But I had no context, it wasn't like I was taking it with bikers or taking it with other druggies — I was taking it because I felt it was the right thing to do. It's almost... when you're looking for them they tell you where to come. They do teach you, I believe that." He smiles as he says it. "I was brought up by mushrooms!"

“I was desperate for the Baader-Meinhof group to blow my bloody Dad up and disrupt the nauseating regimentation of my life”

After his mushroom initiation, Balance began an investigation of altered states, which at first was a due illumination — until he started to down substances like his death depended on it, and his ship started to list. What began as immersion threatened to drown out everything. A couple of years back, Balance was surfing alcoholism proper, knew it and drew back. Measures were taken, measures were refused. He stopped short of the late *Alcoholics Anonymous* trip, unable to commit to a complete and Christian abstinence, unwilling to disown an ethics of excess, to denounce all the darkened routes that lead to gnosis, night. As Balance says on the revealing “Paranoid Inlay” (an ambivalent meditation on ambivalence): “Serenity is a problem/When you get this close to heaven.” (“Serenity” is a key word in rehab programmes.) Although I’m now a mostly fruit tea and tempered bases, there is still the occasional headluck moment just to maintain an unhealthy Balance.

“The most banal definition of [addiction] is that it’s to do with boredom. I actually think it’s more complex and more profound than that.” We’re in a similar grey zone here — and I float my theory that when drink and drugs become ‘a problem’, the real problem is often with Time, our uneasy or unconfirmed place in it. Balance agrees that with age (and a measure of luck), a certain natural temperance often takes and the body rights itself without any outside help. Today, Coil achieve the same transcendent

results via “natural” means. Broadcast with the Sea Priestess. Chaos magical and calm recollection. Wave machine music.

“The Mothership & The Fatherland” (on *Astrol Disaster*) is partly an invocation of one of Balance’s unlikeliest icons. Kate Bush “She’s so hidden,” he comments in hushed tones, “she’s one of the aspects of the Goddess.” I have no problems with this. I worship at this altar too. Under the English rose is a Redchan volcano, behind the Q awards another Roeg-eh mayanek. The little Laura Ashley lamb of public perception uncloaks in the crucible of the studio into Other, more fearful aspects. Do Coil likewise feel such verigo in the studio?

“An old quote I use — ‘We make the studio sacred and then we blaspheme it.’ And we do — I genuinely believe that.” Their studio time isn’t hamstringing by record company timetable and the knowall pro tools who invariably come with it. “It’s very important we don’t let people in, hanging round playing pool, stuff that goes on in a lot of studios. None of that.” What he does do is dream. “While we’re working I’ll go and have a lie down and when I wake up again we’ll start the music over. I have to dream it first. I can lucid dream — it happens quite a lot.”

“The Mothership & The Fatherland” proceeds from a Cope-ious interest. Balance has taken in the syncretic music — the Prog gross — of 1970s Germany and what he terms its “cosmic connection [and] cosmic couriers.” A synchronicity also touching on Sun Ra’s nixed myths and Funkadelic’s staged ufology. “It’s obviously to do with LSD and their drug intake. The Mothership and the Fatherland — it’s the mother and the father, taking in both those aspects.” This is the Germany of Pynchon’s *Groovy’s Rainbow*: a post-war “Zone” where spiritualism and science cross, where Werner Von Braun talks about the afterlife and rocket scientist Jack Parsons digs a hole in Mojave skies with his quantum tantra. A strange graph glimmers under recovered history, mixing divergent strands: pharmaceuticals, heavy industry and electronic drone. Krautrockbabala.

“Guns and drugs and electrical music, yes.” Balance pauses. “It’s strange. I’d never realised but I have more of a claim to these ideas I’m thinking, because I was brought up in Germany. I didn’t hear any Krautrock, but I was aware of it. I was on RAF camp at the time of the Baader-Meinhof group. I was desperate for them to blow my bloody Dad up and disrupt the nauseating regimentation that surrounded my life. I was well up for it!”

Balance had an Army upbringing. Its incessant shuffle the very opposite of a settled English upbringing (symbol the sturdy Oak). “It’s an odd childhood,” he agrees. “You have friends all around you that you grow up with — but you keep changing schools, leaving every few years. It’s horrible. I feel like suing them. I really feel quite bitter about it. I went to nine schools before I was 11 and then got put into a boarding school — which was my saving grace because I got some stability. But before, it was terrible



uprooting you all the time and having to make new friends and losing friends every time."

From the off, a surreal life. Even the "stability" of the boarding school was relative: the boys looked at Johnny rather askew when he began to relate Blakean visions like the uncanny-winged messenger that visited him one morning on the playing fields. "I had terrible trouble at school because I'd try to articulate these things, and they would just isolate me." He felt decidedly ambivalent about his Goddess-given talent ("I don't want to be the one to play this dangerous game") until he educated himself out of it. His childhood lives on as a passionate eternal present. The visions stay.

"I think at this point in my life now I've assimilated them," he says. "I've learned enough about other people's visionary experiences I always thought if I had visions I'd be really nice — you'd sit at there and see fumes gambling out on the lawn or whatever. But it's not like that at all for me. It was like absolutely horrific things — I'd look at curtains and look at trees and see just a mass of dead people I'd try to fight against it — now, having read Austin Osman Spare and so on, I've grown into an understanding of it. I have periods when it gets oppressive and periods when I have really lovely things. A feeling of God's love entering into my heart — not that I'm Christian, but I know that feeling. That's what you see — you see heaven and hell."

The visions stay, but the context lacks. It's been layered over with Church of England politesse and lukewarm (Wilson/Blair) techno homily, behind which "The interiors of Albion's fibres and nerves were hidden" (Blake). The repressed returns, the archaic blooms — only we don't have the ritual to translate the messages. Other cultures have ritual means to tap into these ancestral realms. Yet there has existed a chain of avatars who set themselves to find receptive forms for these functions: Dee's "Enochian" syntax, Spare's drawings, Yeats and the Golden Dawn. This wisdom was mislaid by a Britain dedicated to the transient Now, anaesthetised by glib media pills. One positive pill was the nascent rave scene, but if we had the means to fall into Trance, we lacked the astral grammar to bring back news from the Dionysian whorl. "Ecstatic" visions spewed forth into a vacuum — the James Fox clones moved in to club it to death, "lifestyle" magazines finished off the hit. A world turned upside down was brought back to earth, earthed in a barrow boy brag of DJ paycheck and "largin' it" crass 80s materialism under a North Face jacket.

But there was a spark — and even as Col kept it alive under different skins, Balance is personally hurt by how soon it was extinguished, how quickly erased by revisionist histories. "When we were doing it we considered we were changing the world. Because there was an incredible spiritual and important core to all that — at least the 60s had been revised, lessons could be learnt."

Balance and Christopherson are old enough to have seen many false dawns come and go, seen Britain kill its Jung, extrude the steepest censor the messengers. Despite the facile new hegemony of gagging and shaming, sexuality remains a core point. In 1993, Col's opening drum roll provoked outrage — at a time when "It's Raining Men" set the zeegeest, two gay maps were causing turmoil and trouble with iron echo and subterranean rumble: "How To Destroy Angels" — with its description "Music for the accumulation of male sexual energy" — was too much for most psyches to take.

"First of all, it was sexual energy. The thing is, they didn't realise we were gay back then. It wasn't heterosexual male sex energy and there's a big difference: a lot of the message was that people were thinking 'misogyny,' 'exclusion of women' — and it was a Mars-based record, so it did have that masculine element to it. But it was written by gay men and that must always be the basis we can respond to. Although we have

and still have heterosexual members in the band, the Time Machines [live show] at the Queen Elizabeth Hall is going to consist of gay men, the four of us, so the energy is going to be very interesting."

This sexual aspect awaits a sympathetic historian. It's a subject beyond the reach of this test, but for anyone ready to hear it, Col's discography is a palimpsest amenable to various readings: it aligns them with a gay modernist subversion of established codes, war iconoclasts like Hocquenghem (Freud/Hank), Burroughs (sci-hocology), Pasolini (Catholicism). A chatty kind of paradigm the City as an interconnecting series of holes and toes and couplings (a topographical cluster fuck), a sexualised pick-up of the Situationists' hangover psychogeography.

But this subculture has been forced to change its alchemy now one of combination

dosages and campaign armour, of protest and

background reading. Phase shift. Healing tone.

"For strange it was not that he should sometimes dream of the dead, whose thoughts are always upon Death" (Thomas Browne). Compared to theatre and literature, alt music's response to AIDS has been charitable at best, mediocre as a rule. With Col the subject is raised through evocative tone and studio invocation. Col's recent work (especially *Musick* 2), seems haunted by an air of lost dead friends and departed others?

"Again its borderline — is it something lost or is it something being rediscovered, burrowed into?" Today's Balance gleams with tempered optimism. "When I was young I was really quite scared of the dark — I think my parents taught me to be — and I remember

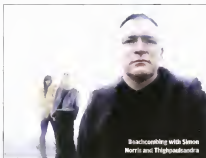
the deciding thing was, I turned around and said 'I'm going to go to the woods at night and walk into the darkness and embrace it and I die, I die. I die. I remember doing that and nothing happened.' I suddenly thought I now know fear of the dark is wrong. In fact, it's comforting. So at that point in my life I embraced — literally — the darkness. I mean, not in the sense of evil."

"I'm on a lifelong mission to get rid of this equation 'dark is evil and light is good.' It's all to do with rediscovering the point that we don't need lights," he continues. "Light — illumination — comes from within the darkness, not from electrical lighting. I think Christian-based society's got that very wrong. They think that as soon as Britain is lit up it'll be a safer place to live — if you can see it, then you can capture it, control it — and you're absolutely wrong. It's the other way around. If we plunged into darkness everyone would be safe."

Derek Jarman mourned how he had replaced flickering fire with the TV

screen's dead flat fish-eye. Balance echoes a sorely missed mentor: "Terrible — one way transmission instead of a Jungian place of safety, where everyone's unconscious is allowed to come up and be discussed and played with. Darkness should be played with, not feared! *Musick To Play In The Dark* is one of our first attempts to redefine that time when it became dark, the sun set and we were sitting by the fire and people would tell stories to each other — and that's the time when genuine magic was woven between people, and language became more powerful. It's a time zone that's gone in most places and it's a bonding point we've lost."

"The Dreamer Is Still Asleep" surely whispers a second meaning: the Warrior King asleep under the hills, waiting for our call? "It's King Arthur," beams Balance mischievously. "There's supposedly three lots of King Arthurs somewhere. What are they waiting for? Why wait? Britain needs them now!" Astral Disaster is out now on *Threshold House: Musick To Play In The Dark*. Volume 2 will be available on *I Play by mail order from Threshold House: Issue Directory*. Volume 1 will be re-released after 2000. Col present Time Machines at London's South Bank this month. See Out There Col Website: www.brainwashed.com/col



"While we're working I'll go and have a lie down and when I wake up again we'll start the music over. I have to dream it first"

invisible jukebox



Every month we play a musician a series of records which they're asked to identify and comment on — with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear. This month it's the turn of...

Sussan Deyhim

Tested by Louise Gray

PHOTO: RONALD E. SPYER

Vocalist Sussan Deyhim left her hometown of Tehran, Iran, where she had studied as a ballet dancer and musician, soon after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. She spent time in Belgium and London, and for the past four years has lived in New York. Recording acclaimed albums of both classical Persian music and her own Ambient/ electroacoustic devotional songs, all of which draw from a deeply founded experiential core and Sufi belief, Deyhim has earned a reputation for her extraordinary vocal

improvisations. Her best-known discs, *Desert Equations* (1987) and *Mahoun* (1997), were collaborations with long-term associate Richard Horowitz, who also appears alongside bassist Reggie Workman on her new CD *Maximal Of God: Divine Love Songs Of The Persian Sufi Masters*, released this month on Crammed Discs. Her work with Bill Laswell, Peter Gabriel and Jah Wobble have earned her audiences which straddle the spurious categorising that many non-Western musicians suffer from. Reveling in her transnationalism, Deyhim is currently working on four video and music installations with Venice Biennale-winning Iranian artist Shirin Neshat, a project which, after opening at New York's Whitney Museum in March, will take her back to Iran for the first time in 23 years. "I will go back to Iran," she says of her impending visit, "not as an Iranian, but as one from a world culture."



JAH WOBBLE'S INVADERS OF THE HEART

"Lam Phouthay" from Molam Dub (30 Hertz)
[Listens intently] The best just had to come! [Laughs] They couldn't just leave it

alone! Nice processing. I don't know who it is, though I'm not a major listener to what's going on. It's Juh Wobble's forthcoming album. He's using musicians from Laos to explore the links between dub and ecstatic music.

It's definitely got that Juh feel as that bass works through. Sounds good. I especially like the vocals in the introduction, very interesting. People always feel that it's like a sacrifice to process ancient vocals, because it's supposed to be a degenerate thing, but I think it's an interesting idea, especially if you can create a third dimensionality. It's obviously great stuff already, but you can create your own sonic signature by processing vocals. I do that a lot, because there's something about this combination with 'into the future' electronics which has the ancient soul. It has an interesting tension.

You lived in the Far East for a while, didn't you?

I just had a project in Hong Kong, so I was there for three or four months and about the same time in Bali. I can't say I have lived there. I made a study of Balinese music. I liked a lot of the gamelan music, especially traditional bamboo gamelan. It has really interesting overtones that create other overtones when it's playing. It's almost like Tibetan singing. It creates this virtual place. I was also very interested in the music from Lombok, the Islamic island of Indonesia, in which there are a lot of Koranic chants sung by women. It's so beautiful. I had so many tapes and my friends took them all. I have to go back. You really don't have so many Koranic chants recorded by women. In some [Islamic] places there is an absolute prohibition of women singing, and certainly not reciting the Koran. What's interesting about Indonesia is that their history includes Hinduism and Buddhism, and their version of Islam is in a way more open. That's a very interesting aspect of Islam there.

You've worked with Juh Wobble: how did you meet?

When I moved to London we met through a common friend. We liked each other mutually, I think. After the release of his record with all those vocalists from the Middle East [Take Me To God, 1994] he asked me to join his tour. I mentioned to him that I'm an improviser and so we always improvised a 20 minute piece towards the end of each concert. My collaboration with him was always based on improvisation. We made some recordings a tiny little thing on a Brian Eno record he'd produced, and I recently heard a classical track I'd done with him which has just come out on 3D Hertz. I'm singing with Latin words and it sounds really nice. But you know, I have such a hard time finding time to listen to music. You'll be surprised at how little I know about everything, although I'll have something to say about it!

FARAMARZ PAYVAR & ENSEMBLE with KHATEREH PARVANEH

"Dashtgar Segah" from Iran: Persian Classical Music (Elektra Nonesuch)
It's a classical piece, I'm trying to find out which one Khaterreh Parvaneh, this is. It's a known song. She was a very modern, liberated woman in her own time. Very elegant. She was part of The Persian National Radio Orchestra, I believe. I know this melody, but the lyrics it's in the mode of segah — it's always a love song. But this is at least 30 years old, and the modes are very old. They haven't progressed since the 11th century, relatively speaking.

Were you aware of this music, growing up in Tehran?

Yeah. I was a ballet dancer, but also a folk dancer, so we studied with a lot of old people from the village. In my time, it was very hip to get into your own tradition. This [classical music] for us was still heavy, but there was a really interesting festival in Shiraz, with an amazing variety of things and, of course, there was always a very beautiful classical Iranian concert at the tomb of Hafiz, one of the [14th century] Sufi poets. Outdoors, magical, by night. There were some amazing performances in the ruins of Persepolis by living theatre and musicians. An amazing place. Shiraz. I can imagine why Hafiz ended up in that city.

Do you imagine this music has survived the Revolution?

It has, yeah, but women have been working within their own community, so I don't know if I should say there are some interesting things happening among women, because I don't know what they are. But in terms of the male tradition, my God, there is some amazing music from the last few years, all of it coming from the Kurdish tradition. There's a group called Kamkar and various classical singers, plus a couple of female singers who sing for women and wouldn't stop. I've heard some amazing music from the regions of the Caspian Sea. Kurdish music is amazingly healing because it's very linked to Sufism and Sufism is linked to Islam. That tradition has been blossoming. And there are some sick studies in Iran now, as a result of commerce between Iran and Japan.



WAYNE SHORTER

"Deluge" from Juhl (Blue Note)
It's the man of my dreams. I'm speechless. Wayne Shorter and then the bass player's Reggie.

[Workman?] This generation of musicians is just so cool. There's the tone, the spirit, there's this urge for expression and stretching outlooks. This [track] is before it was all institutionalised and [jazz] became a way of doodling. There's something about this that just makes me melt.

I met Reggie in the early 80s, when he was working on an opera, and he approached Richard Horowitz, who's my main longtime soulmate and collaborator. We met at dinner and talked about music and it clicked.

Some styles of musicianship just lose rational control and get down with it. I don't know another way to say it. Is it the same loss of control that ecstatic music allows? They're both vulnerable, but the first is God-given. This is human.

YMA SUMAC

"Kuyaywa (Inca Love Song)" from Legend Of The Sun Virgin (Capitol)

[Peals of laughter] Sounds like... nobody else. It's a kitsch attempt at devotional singing. It's an Italian? No, Yma! [Shrieks of laughter.] I hear her now, but because you started with that guy's voice, I thought... oh, it wasn't a guy? It was her voice?

There's a fantastic drag queen in New York called Lady Bunny, who used to perform Yma Sumac and swing around on ropes rigged up like jungle creepers.

I can see that. But I want to see Yma Sumac perform in New York. I did about ten years ago and a cabaret place. She was there with a band and she went for it. I'd never heard her sing and I was curious. I thought, is this for real? She had this dramatic presence and she was really hitting those notes. She was really fun.

There was a period when Hollywood wanted to access their idea of ritual music, this exotic otherness...

Yeah, it's always been interested in gateways to other worlds. This is far-fetched in the extreme though. I was very conscious of the colonial aspect of all this. You know, some performer from one part of the world would be introduced to a crowd from another part of the world. There's always this translator, this hip, cool translator who happens to be the great white man who happens to have the spirit and the death to bring to the piece. And you're sitting watching, thinking, There's this amazing thing happening behind you, why don't you just step out and let them do their thing?

What can a British person, for example, who knows nothing of Sufism and who's never been to Iran, understand from your work?

My question back to anyone who asks that is, What do I care? I don't care what someone's judgment is about the way I should be presented or the reality of my death, or whether I'm degenerate or not, or punk or monk or sacred or blasphemous. I don't care. But on the other hand, what can they do with me? We all know there are good people in the world and there have been people who really have made a difference, investing their soul in bringing new music, valuable things, to new places and facilitating an understanding. Peter [Gabriel] has done it, he's done it with heart, he's been initiated with it. He's done it with honour.

But from the point of view of someone who sees what I do as folklore and has a picture of me with some dangling jewellery jangling from my hips to justify their fantasy of me and their fantasy of the depth of my being — sorry! I'm trying to find a balance between Sufism and me. I'm not interested in some folk song bullshit, and I'm suffering for it. We should all have a dignified identity based on not where you come from, but who you are as a soul. That transcends cultural barriers and parameters of wherever you're from.

invisible jukebox

Things are subtler than we give them credit for. You know why? It's a lot harder to deal with subtle things. Subtlety requires intention.



LOOP GURU "Sussan 11" from *Duniya: The Intrisic Passion Of Mysterious Jay (Nation)*

(Immediately) C'est moi
C'est Sussan! I have this
writer friend in New York,

Brian Cullman, who brought this friend of his to my studio. It happened to be Ali Naeaz, who founded Nation Records. I was working on the avant garde then, when there was a scene called the avant garde, and Ali, who was from Pakistan, talked about what was happening in London. Something about him felt very authentic. He was coming from a new generation, there was this Pakistani talking about HipHop and dance music. We exchanged some tapes — I'd been working on a series of pieces for an electronic opera scheduled for 2002 — and a few months later, he told me about a band in his company, Loop Guru, who wanted to work with me. I listened to the tapes and thought they were bad back. I did some "Sussanics" for them, and it was released on this album.

It was fun, but our heads were in different places. The idea that kids in clubs were going to take ecstasy and get off on my voice was kind of insulting.

THE GRATEFUL DEAD

"Blues For Allah" from *Blues For Allah* (Grateful Dead Records)

Oh, I've heard this before. I just can't place it. I like what they're doing with the melody, though.
It's a group with a long history and different periods, but this is an unusual attempt to convey desert atmospheres.

I know this but I just can't remember. It's nice. I had a collaboration with Mickey Hart and Jerry Garcia about ten, 13 years ago. When my record came out, I got a call asking if I'd like to work with them. They were doing a benefit concert for [anthropologist] Joseph Campbell's last reading. Richard Horowitz and I were invited to Mickey Hart's ranch and we went and recorded some music and then played this concert, with three or four songs and then some improvisations. I briefly met Carlos Santana there. It was a kind of out of town, out of space experience. But it was interesting and Mickey was very enthusiastic about my work.

We were talking about kids on E confusing hedonism with spirituality a few minutes ago, but The Dead have had a glorious psychedelic history.

The thing that's gangorous isn't The Grateful Dead, it's the people who follow The Grateful Dead. The Dead themselves are doing good things — jamming, creating improvisations, being intuitive — the danger is the ultimate surrendering of the Deadheads towards the group. It's fine if it's in the realm of music, it's not if you just want to dwell in this retro-space. It's not exactly stagnant, but it's another error in time. I would feel very uncomfortable if people listened to my music in that

way, because I have nothing that is standing between me and the ratios of energy I'm trying to reach. I think the less obstacles you have, the more experience will be. There's something about the human experience of reaching out and having that urgency that is so crucial to the artist's work.

Is there a point where improvisation goes to another place?

That's why you do improvisation. That's the whole point and philosophy. You trust that you're capable of letting go, and even if you fail you'll be more satisfied with yourself than if you'd just created something very structured and lived that. Improvisers are philosophers of life.

When you're beginning a piece of improv, do you know what it is you're looking for?

In music, I'm looking for unbelievable melodies that are, for me, codes that decipher zones of my inner psyche that I will be equated with only when and if that improvisation has been an interesting one. I always trust that something is an amazing experience when the melody that comes out of me makes me so curious to follow it. It doesn't matter if I fail or win. I'm just going. When I listen to some of the best — like John Coltrane — that's what I see that very fragile, open place in which something very religious takes place. That's what improvisation is about, the rest is doodling. The spirit of improvisation is about looking for religion, a place where we trust to surrender to let go and tap into an older place that has to do with the shamanistic.

Does improvisation have a large part to play in Sufi music?

In the way of life of Sufi music, I think. A fair amount, because it has to do with your state of being at the time you're performing. It could be that you're repeating something over and over for ten hours, but it's the way you live that one phrase. In classical Persian music, improvisations are very huge. An example from another tradition is Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, a great spirit. His music was passionate, thoroughly touching.

PHILIP GLASS

"Hymn To The Sun" from *Akhnoen* (CBS)

Oh, I know this, too. But I don't remember it. It can't be [Hector] Zazu.

The repeated phrases should give you a clue.

Philip Glass? But it's pretty straight [laughs]. There are a lot of changes here. Interesting, because Philip's music is often experienced in terms of repetitive progressions. It's the start of the "Hymn," one of the key moments in the opera.

Funny, because I wouldn't have guessed this was Philip. It feels as if it's from a different tradition. Is it an older piece?

It dates from the mid-80s. He's using ancient languages in a music that could only be late 20th century; there's a sense that he's looking for a translation program between Western and Eastern modes.

The whole idea of microtonal tuning is so linked to certain cosmologies and modes in Eastern cultures that it cannot be separated. Cosmology in this sense means astrological ratios, architectural ratios, musical ratios

that music has stopped in time in the 11th century, where everything was extremely sophisticated and highly harmonised — harmony in the true essence, the alchemical sense of the word. So the study of microtonal music from someone [ie Glass] who's been involved in serial music is a curiosity, but I've very rarely been able to find that deep thing you get in Indian or Iranian music — it's like you just can't separate the note from its content. And the note is not a note, it's another step towards deciphering a code.

Musical notes to be taken lightly, then?

Well, it can be. There's always a function for everything. You could even do an "Eastern temple" room in your house, but it isn't a temple. It is what it is. I don't mean to sound like I'm defending Eastern mysticism. I am pretty detached, and we could talk about HipHop or whatever, but Eastern tradition has something to do with the truth for me. I really am profoundly, completely open in terms of anything that's brilliant and meaningful and fun. I'm not holding some flag for some era or era. I really am the punk who meets the monk. But I want to be the right punk.



RICHARD HOROWITZ "Night Train" from *The Shattering Sky OST* (Virgins)

(Immediately) That's Richard's music. We've been together around this time, so I remember this quite well. It's from *The Shattering Sky* soundtrack. It has some women's voices that [author and composer] Paul Bowles, who was resident in Morocco for much of his life, recorded.

You've spent time there, too.

I've spent a lot of the last 15 years there. It's been a substitute for Iran. I fully love the atmosphere. I visited Paul Bowles, but mostly, I spent a lot of time around Marrakech. There's a Gnawa festival there every summer and, for whatever reason, I'm the only woman invited there. So I put myself in a 30-piece Gnawa band and we travel about. In some ways it's chaotic, in others it's very special. Very special music.

How come you're the only woman?

I don't know, but they actually have some Gnawa women singers, and women are definitely present, they sing and dance. In terms of Gnawa, it has always been male dominated. I just recorded ten Berber women in Marrakech two weeks ago, for a soundtrack for *Shrim* [Nesha]. This new film that we're opening at the Whitney Biennial in March. This film is based on a love story of an adult couple in a taboo society. I don't even know what the Berber women were singing — I think mostly traditional songs, but what I did was to create other things and process them, so they become this other thing: haunting melodic landscapes.

I've heard Morocco is now producing female pop singers in the rai mode.

Oh, there are some great ones, really funky. Like bad girls — the ones I like. L.

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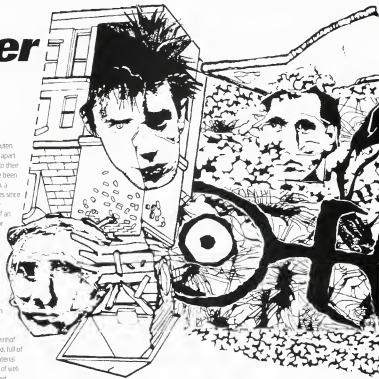
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the primer

For 20 years now, Einstürzende Neubauten have been perfecting the art of falling apart and they still haven't got it right. True to their name — Collapsing New Buildings — they've been perpetually poised at the brink of destruction, a disaster waiting to happen. In the two decades since founder members Blixa Bargeld and Andrew Chudy began pounding on the foundations of an autobahn overpass in the southeastern sector of Berlin, their music has been a remarkably sensitive register of the seismic shifts that have occurred both in their own lives and in the city they still call their home. Then as now, Neubauten songs are the noise of tectonic plates grinding against one another, the sound of individual desire rubbing up the wrong way against the state body.

Born in 1959, Blixa Bargeld came of age in the late 70s, when the Social Democrats posited over the cracks in the social fabric: post-war guilt, Cold War hysteria, Baader-Meinhof with billboard images of a Modell Deutschland, full of happy young families surrounded by their material possessions. Alienated from its false promise of well-being, he and Einstürzende Neubauten devised strategies of failure in defiance of the monumental state architecture towering above them, using whatever materials came to hand to search out cracks in the new temples — "Future runs One day gross will also grow over the city", as Blixa puts it in "Die Befindlichkeit Des Landes" ("Lay Of The Land") on this month's new album *Silence Is Sexy*.

Involving both Walter Benjamin's cheerfully destructive character and Nazi architect Albert Speer's theory of ruins, they dialectically drummed at the German asphalt to disinter the skeletons buried beneath it. In the process they found music in the most ungiving of materials — junkyard metal, concrete, road studs and heavy machinery, shopping trolleys, styrofoam containers and plastic bins, broken instruments, faulty amplifiers and cable interference, beating hearts, convulsing flesh and cracking bones. The resulting noises anticipated much of what has followed, be they the screaming overloaded circuits of Japanese nosemakers, the jarring tonalities resulting from Hi-Pop sampler collisions or the cuts, clicks and glitches of the Powerbook legions. What differentiates Einstürzende Neubauten from other such connoisseurs



A bi-monthly series in which we offer a user's guide to the recordings of some of our favourite music. This month, Biba Kopf cheerfully surveys the destructive character of **Einstürzende Neubauten**. Illustration: Savage Pencil

of dissonance, however, is the sheer physicality of what they endure to attain their results. The immense effort required reverberates through their bodies, crossing their examinations of alien sonarities with explorations of the different psychic states that their punishing activity topples them into. In this sense, Neubauten's noise has always been about urgent metaphysical inquiry, as Nick Cave once noted in an appreciation of his close colleagues written for the Berlin city magazine *Tip*: "Through their own hard work, by steadfast lack of compromise, through the pain of true self-expression, through a genuine love of their medium, they have attained a sound that is first authentic, and utterly their own. They are a group that has developed its own special language for one reason — to give voice to their souls."

Einstürzende Neubauten
Für Den Untergang / 'Stahlversion'
(Monogram 005 77)

Einstürzende Neubauten
Strategien Against Architecture 1980-83
(Mute STUPM14 CD)

Various Artists
Als Die Partysamen Kamen
(Zensor 25115 CD)

They had little going for them, not even a name, when Blixa Bargeld agreed to their debut appearance in a Berlin club called Moon on 7 April 1980. Pressed for something to put on the bill, he remembered how one



boy used to crack up his schoolmates by repeating, very slowly, "Ein-sturz-ende Neu-bau-ten." Immediately attracting attention in the post-war walled city that came close to total annihilation in 1945, the name was his first media coup. "So mysterious... It's simply fantastic," Bärbel told future manager Klaus Mäck, then a Hamburg punk writer and underground film maker, in the German journal *Rock Session* 6 (1981), "and our image was so kaputt." Kaputt is putting it kindly. Back then Bärbel was a cadaverous 21 year old with a savaged scalp hidden beneath a black cap, bulging eyes, rotten skin and teeth. The occasional garbage collecting or gravedigging job aside, he scratched an existence selling live cassettes and interesting vitamins from his second-hand store Esengrau (iron-grey) in Schönberg. Now he had a name and a debut appearance fixed, all he needed was a group to make it real. After frantically calling around, he finalised the line-up of himself, Andrew Chudy, aka Nu or Endruh Unruh, Gudrun Gut and Beate Bartel. The women quit soon after to form the shortlived

trio Maria D (followed by, in Gudrun's case, Malena) and Ocean Club, leaving Bärbel and Unruh to rehearse and play alone in their regular retreat, a cave-like bolthole underneath an inner city autobahn overpass in southeastern Berlin. A month later they recorded their debut single "Für Den Untergang" ("For The Decline") there, using transistor radio amplifiers, film canisters, an old washing machine, the bolthole's walls and Unruh's steel kit to drum up Bärbel's first claustrophobic yet weirdly compelling dance ritual for decline and fall into ruin. Bärbel told Mäck in 1981 "I once heard that Bush drummers could kill men by biding them to a stake and then starting to drum in the rhythm of their heart, gradually speeding up... and after three days the men are dead." "Für Den Untergang" and its "Steel Version" were Neubauten's first Samson-like attempt to pull the temple of Berlin in on themselves by drumming at the foundations of one of its autobahn overpasses. "Dance madonness/Dance not for sun/Dance not for rain/Solo and alone/Alone too/For your ruin." When the

butterfly wings of the modern Kongresshalle, a gift from the American occupiers, collapsed a few weeks after the single's release, Bärbel gleefully proclaimed the disaster as Neubauten's second propaganda coup.

The single was released on the emerging Berlin independent label Monogram, established by Elizabeth Recker with a set-up grant which the Berlin city senate used to dole out to newlyweds. At the time Recker was more interested in projects such as P1E and Die Sentimentale Jugend (The Sentimental Youth). Both featured the prolific 15 year old electronic wunderkind Alexander Hacke, who then called himself Alexander Von Borsig after the Berlin plant where his father worked. Hacke smuggled Neubauten into Die Sentimentale Jugend's studio sessions, and together and apart they came up with the raw concrete noise collages of urban tribal rhythms, broadcast fragments, rumored guitar and voices that made it onto the Neubauten side of Monogram Sampler (Monogram 006 LP). These Monogram releases are almost as impossible to find as the handful of Neubauten live and studio cassettes Bärbel used to sell at Esengrau during their first year of existence. However, a limited edition CD reissue of a lost cassette class, the great *Stuhlaufszenen* tape, was sold at the Neubauten merchandise stand during their 1996 Erste Live tour, along with the CD *Live Material* 1981/82 (both unlabelled releases). But the nearest place to access un-

Neubauten is their 1983 UK release *Strategies Against Architecture*, a compilation put together by Jim Threlwell aka Foetus, which includes "Störversion", some live material and studio tracks from their second single "Kalte Sterne" and debut album proper *Kollaps* (see below). The original A side "Für Den Untergang" is on the compilation *Als Die Partisanen kamen* (When The Partisans Came), an excellent overview of the Berlin underground from 1979-83, which features the aforementioned Maria D, Frieder Butzmann and Mekano's Destructiv Kohmandos, among others, and opens with the Neubauten/Sentimentale Jugend track "Wollt ihr Den Totale Beherrschung?" ("Do You Want Total Satisfaction") — a pun on Josef Goebbels's infamous exhortation, "Do you want total war?", essentially a mutated take of The Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction".

Abwärts

"Roboter In Der Nacht"/"Für Mutti"
(ZickZack ZZ28 7)

Abwärts

Arnold/Kornia
(ZickZack ZZ10 LP)

Abwärts

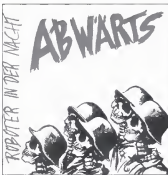
Der Westen Ist Einsam
(Pharcy 846025 CD)

The cover of Abwärts's profoundly affecting album *Der Westen Ist Einsam* (The West Is Lonely) pictures Japanese sailors waving off a kamikaze pilot on his last-ditch mission. On the inside sleeve, three Germans



witness a fourth, FM Einheit (aka Mufti) stab himself in the chest while manically grinning. Seated next to Mufti is bassist Mark Chung, looking a little queasy at his future Neubauten partner's antics, even though as a performance art veteran he's no stranger to pain in the name of art. By 1982, when this album attained its major label release, the German punk scene had been all but swept away by the more andy Neue Deutsche Welle (German New Wave), for which groups like Abwärts had ironically prepared the way three years earlier. To outsiders, then, Mufti's act of self-mutilation must have appeared as defiantly futile as the last ditch kamikaze defence of the Japanese *Hemai*. Yet hardcore artists like Hamburg's Abwärts always acted like they had their backs to the wall, going at it head to head with audiences as if they were grimly replaying the pitched battles between police and squatters then happening along the Hafenstraße, a heavily squatted zone near the harbour. It's easy to see their appeal: to Blava Bargeld and NU Uruuth, whose own music gaily track-mimicked similar upheavals in Berlin's Kreuzberg. In 1981 the two Berliners were big enough fans of Abwärts to travel down to a small village near Dachau to catch them live. Shortly after, Mufti joined Neubauten, later bringing bassist Chung with him. For a while the pair continued in both groups until their Neubauten commitments grew too heavy.

Early on, Abwärts also had a woman singer and violinist Ma Gita (an instrumental voice, incidentally, in Bargeld's choral title track to Neubauten's third studio album *Habiter Mensch*; see below), who, along with Mufti's predilection for toys, noise and scrap metal percussion, seriously restricted the group's appeal to the dum-dum boys of the then prevailing punk orthodoxy, even as they sonically enriched the witheringly sorry songs of notional leader Frank Z. In its own way, their 1980 debut LP *Amok/Koma* is as tremendous a representation of Hamburg's diseased international port zone (the original source of the city's immense wealth, evident in its suburban, lake- and riverside villas) as Neubauten's early records are of wilted-in-Berlin fevered hothouse atmosphere.



Workshop saws, tools and toys shear away from brutish core it's embroidered with oriental trappings snatched from Fritz Lang's Hollywood tomb. Then "Turkenblues" fillets pop erotica with Ma Gita's giddy, sawing violin, which also skewers Frank Z's surgical savaging of the kind of anti-foreigner complaints routinely rehearsed in the West's yellow presses. Starting out as an urheroic mechanised take-off of James Brown's *Sex Machine*, the single coupling "Roboter in der Nacht" ("Robots in the Night") and "Für Mufti" ("For Mufti") mounts a portrayal of German domestic life that is as brilliantly bleak as anything by German film director Mike Leigh and just as heartbreaking.

Destructive characters: Mufti in Abwärts (above); and NU Uruuth spoilt for choice in Tokyo (below)



Einstürzende Neubauten

"Kalte Sterne"
(ZickZack ZZ40 2x7")

Einstürzende Neubauten

Kollaps
(ZickZack ZZ65 CD)

With Mufti added to the core duo of Bargeld and Uruuth Neubauten's records took on a physicality the match of his immense presence. That's not just because in this sick company, Mufti looks like the only one capable of manipulating the group's increasingly weighty armoury — through his roadwork in Abwärts, not to mention other important German groups of the period like Palas Schauburg (with Holger Hiller and Thomas Fehlmann), he'd acquired the musical experience to help Bargeld and Uruuth shape their end-time visions. If Uruuth has undoubtedly earned his reputation as the group's 'destructive character', in Walter Benjamin's oft-quoted definition ("The destructive character is cheerful"), neither Bargeld nor Mufti were unsmiling slouches, when it came to clearing spaces in the joyless run that was Germany's postwar culture.

Mostly recorded in Hamburg to accommodate Mufti's continuing Abwärts commitments, the "Kalte Sterne" ("Cold Stars") double single and Kollaps (both 1981) are at once Neubauten's most destructive and yet most enduring releases. On "Kalte Sterne" Bargeld evokes his earlier peculiar philosophy of decline into a celebration of Shiva, Goddess of destruction, to which Einstein and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse have been invited. "After us comes nothing more/We're cold stars," Bargeld screams ceaselessly over the song's remorseless thump and congealing organ rounds. To Maack in 1981 Bargeld confessed that the song was in part a tribute to heavily political German rock communards Ton Steine Scherben. This admission partially recasts its seeming pessimism as the suddenly clearing vision of a soiled utopia. Like "Schwein", this song is obtainable on the Mufti Strategies set, but the double single is still worth hunting down for its other three tracks, including an early minor masterpiece of urban tribalism, "Pygmäen", made up of raging steel percussion and a salvaged classical music broadcast.

With Kollaps, he and Neubauten sought to make the ugliest most unlistenable record ever, even as it grimly hung by its tenuous to song structure. As their best loved record it must be judged a failure on a grand scale, but according to their strategy of failure that makes it their greatest success. Whichever way you lean to it, then, it's a remarkable record, from the back cover's mockery of Pink Floyd's *Ummagumma* skelework display of instruments onwards. Every sound is indeed dirty and disoriented. Its percussive metals are mostly animal and deliberately leaden, but the fat of each blow triggers deep reverberating spaces, the abyssal places these self-willed artists can claim as their own. Like the group's name, their titles are often aptly descriptive. "Listen With Pain", "Muzak While On Remand", "Outside Is Hostile", "Negativ Nern"



Their suggested musical values are evoked by Bargeld's ruined guitar or broken-fingered one-note keyboard, the tape loops and the disarming noises Uruhuh and Muhi beat or bleed into the mix with their purloined machine shop and roadtools

Borsig
Hiroshima
(Supernova NAX01 12")

Sprung Aus Den Wolken
The Story Of Electricity
(Les Disques Du Soleil Et De L'aïe CDS/AS4015 CD)

As noted earlier, Berliners like Bargeld had a facility for staging media coups. Berlin events like 1981's The Undergang Show, staged as a celebration of "genus-like" elitism, raised a profile for its participants that far exceeded the value of the night itself. In Blixa's own judgment, despite the presence of such important players as Neubauten, Die Todliche Dosis (The Deadly Dose), Sprung Aus Den Wolken (Leapt From The Clouds), Maria D., Frieder Butzmann and Alexander Von Borsig, now all of 16 years old. A close friend and collaborator of Neubauten from the beginning, Borsig often mixed them live to powerful effect, drifting into full-time employment with them in 1982. Before signing on, he had also developed a working relationship with Muhi, who features here on his "Hiroshima" max single, released by Klaus Maeck's sadly shortlived Supernova label. Together the pair also worked as Supernova "house producers" on 12" releases by Chiskane F. and chanteuse Mona Mur (also featuring Mark Chung), which quickly disappeared when Maeck's operation went under. Fortunately one Mona Mur track figures on the *Antennen* compilation (see above) and Maeck rescued another, "120 Tage", plus two (unlisted) Borsig pieces for the Belgian double CD anthology *New Wave German Class X* (Classix CX6009 2xCD) he curated in 1994.

But again the Borsig pieces work best as part of the whole EP, where the electronic waltz "Hiroshima"

#Borsig codewords: Blixa Bargeld (left); NU Uruhuh with Muhi, 1985



emerges from ether static. Eventually Borsig's elegy for the city's annihilated elegance fades back into the oblivion of crackle and glitches which morph into "Zu Den Anderen Gerollt Werden". The EP also includes Borsig's weirdly appropriate electro cover of Abwärts's "Japan, Japan".

These Neubauten related tracks were recorded in Hamburg. In 1981 Einstürzende Neubauten, Sprung Aus Den Wolken and Melank: Die Todliche Kohnmandich completed a fraught three week tour of West Germany under the banner Die Berliner Krankheit (The Berlin Sickness), when they discovered that the rest of Germany was pretty hostile. At home, however,

the levered creativity of the 1981-82 Berlin sickness was producing some especially kooky hot-house hybrids in centres like Rinko, the Kreuzberg bar where Bargeld worked on and off as barman. Though it was scarcely large enough to host an intimate head-to-head, it periodically launched such minimalist noise happenings as *Hypnotischer Knoch* (Faux Pas/Kremlin Product PS2/PS3 LP), a rare non-Neubauten outing for NU Uruhuh involving metal percussion, a bathtub full of bottles and a bass guitar. The record documents his collaboration with artist Kiddy Cityn, of Sprung Aus Den Wolken, and Peter Prima and Gla. The latter paired a Dutch-German group *Schlaflose Nächte*, whose *The Angel Will Not Come* (Kremlin Product KRO10 LP) smuggles in, Trojan-horse style, the Bargeld/Neubauten piece "Stimme Erst Feuer/Voice Devours Fire" — one of the earliest sightings of that recurring Neubauten motif, fire.

An important if under-documented figure of the early 80s Berlin scene, Kiddy Cityn's records with Sprung Aus Den Wolken rarely deliver on their opening promises. They're usually based around a singularly mesmerising riff, subsequently scarcely embellished, thereby placing too much emphasis on Kiddy's heavily echoed vocals. But the CD reissue of 1986's *The Story Of Electricity* is an exceptional example of a very Berlin tribal sound. Regular Kiddy collaborator Borsig/Kaeck guests on one track, as well as co-writing the 12" "Pas Attendre"/"Que Pas", a broken-dreamed boulevard ballad that featured in Wim Wenders's Berlin film *Wings Of Desire* (included on the *Electricity* reissue).

Blurred in Berlin: a typical live meltdown, 1985



the primer

Einstürzende Neubauten/Lydia Lunch/Rowland S Howard
"Thirsty Animal"/"Durstiges Tier"
(X 12)

Einstürzende Neubauten
Die Zeichnungen Des Patienten OT
(Some Bizarre SBART002 CD)

Einstürzende Neubauten
2x4
(ROIR RUS8235 CD)

By 1982 Einstürzende Neubauten had fleshed out into a five piece with the addition of Mark Chung and Alex Hacke. "Thirsty Animal" is the first fruit of the mutual appreciation society they quickly developed with The Birthday Party, who'd packed up their profound disaffection with London and moved to Berlin. At that point the Australians were still pals with Lydia Lunch, who accompanied BP guitarist Rowland S Howard to the "Thirsty Animal" sessions. Nick Cave didn't take part, but he vividly described the goings on in an appreciation of Neubauten written for the Berlin city magazine *Tip*: "The studio was cold and lousy and full of amps, trash and steel. And in the middle of the room a microphone pointed to a small, mangy dog rooting around in a steaming pile of pig guts. Blixa Bargeld had a contact mic taped to his chest, while the musclebound Mufti beat on this natural sounding

board with his fists..." In the final mix the sources of many of these queasy sounds are mercifully unrecognisable; and in truth Rowland and Lydia's contributions on the English language side, "Thirsty Animal", are superfluous. However, all that mixed-up meat and Blixa's breast-beating psychically primed as utterly desolate performance, where the muffled and distorted noises of drills, bones, hacked flesh, junkyard percussion and electric whines underscore the crawl through misery plotted by Bargeld's vocal on both takes. For reasons only known by the group and their lawyers, these recordings have been tragically unavailable since their initial release in 1982 on their own shortlived label, though the "Durstiges Tier" side was included on the bonus 12" accompanying the US release of *Die Zeichnungen Des Patienten OT* (*The Drawings Of Patient OT*). And a markedly different live version, highlighting the wounded animal cries Alex Hacke emitted through a bent drainpipe, features on the ROIR release 2x4 (originally on cassette only). Neubauten's only 'official' live release to date. It is essentially a poorly conceived compilation of nevertheless astounding live variations of *Patienten OT* material and ever-evolving period staples like "Sehnsucht" ("Desire Adact") and "Zum Tier Machen" ("Make Into An Animal").

Evident from these live and audio outings is how Neubauten's noise has nothing to do with the abstract pursuit of extremes, or difference for difference's sake. On the contrary, they're the outcome of a search for an

authentic voice, which finds its most eloquent expression in the superbly recorded *Patienten OT* (1983). The casting of the vanadium spammers opening the piece "Vanadium II Ching" decides the musical outcome of their exploration of rare metal tonalities. Here, they draw out moods and atmospheres from the sizzling bellows of an arduous and beat out basslines on a taut industrial rubber band. It is typical of the album's elaborately drawn sound pictures of ruin that make great play with the rubble of hometown Berlin's history, while Bargeld develops his pyromaniac obsession in images of vultures hovering over the fire. Later, on one



Off his trolley: Ketschaps on German TV



of the group's fiercest, most exhilarating tracks, called "Abackeln!", he devoutly attests to the soul-cleansing properties of flames. The album closes on another of Neubauten's most desolate notes, "Die Genäue Zeit" ("Exact Time"), which develops musical and lyrical puns on factory production lines, torturable prms and the 1933-45 Nazi era to work up a devastating critique of the soul-destroying flatness of contemporary popular culture. (For the record, *Patient OT* really was a mental patient, who appears in the schizophrenic report of one Dr Leo Nivari: OT specialised in drawing figures, such as cops and orchestral conductors, so that they looked exactly alike. But, as Bargeld told *Spex* magazine in 1983 "The best thing is, this has got nothing to do with the album".)

Einstürzende Neubauten
Halber Mensch
(Some Bizarre BAR7331 CD)

In the three years separating *Patienten OT* and *Halber Mensch*, Einstürzende Neubauten acquired an extraordinary worldwide notoriety, which was founded on the seemingly insatiable appetite for destruction embodied in their formidable, if often recklessly chaotic performances. Their all-out assaults on the acceptable boundaries of music, deploying jackhammers, drills, chainsaws and whatever scrap metals they could scavenge on the night, often exceeded the borders of the stage. It was as if they

were out to destroy the flimsy physical barriers separating work and play, theatre and reality. Indeed, at one notorious Neubauten-related performance — *Concerto For Machinery And Voice* at London's ICA in 1984 — the somewhat ambitious intention was to keep going at the foundations of the building until they hit the secret Whitehall tunnels running beneath it. But the ICA pulled the plugs before any serious damage it was done. Needless to say they were big hits in Camerlengo America, sparking a short-lived industrial rock explosion (remember Milwaukee's Boy Dirt Car?). which only really ignited a decade later in the digitized forms of Ministry and Nine Inch Nails. Finally, a carefully managed TV campaign preceding their arrival made them the most unlikely teen idols in Japan.

The preposterous *Concerto* aside, their performances during this period were still largely improvised around loose versions of recorded pieces, with Blau vocally riffing on the themes that inspired them. This made their concerts extremely unpredictable. Often overcome by the sheer physicality of their noise, combined with various Neubauten members' intake of intoxicants, they could also become life-threatening. This Neubauten hysteria peaked in the USA in the mid-80s when, unnoticed by his colleagues, Muth disappeared to hospital halfway through a concert after accidentally slicing into his knee with a chainsaw. For sanity's sake, they had to begin applying the same degree of restraint on stage as in the recording studio, if only to get through concerts with limbs intact.

Paradoxically, their best produced recording at this stage, *Haber Mensch* (Irakl Man, 1986), documents their most delicious descent into sensuously altered states. "Yu-Gung (Feed My Ego)" programs in the sound of a chopping blade on glass and a hefty snort, while Bargeld's lyric comically describes the grotesque ballooning of his ego, "ZNS" is a jittery journey through a hopped-up nervous system, ostensibly a drinking, the mock-medieval "Trinklied" follows a rapid downward spiral into a deepening hole. On the upside, the album's masterpieces, "Der Tod Ist Ein Dandy" ("Death Is A Dandy") and "Letztes Biest [Am Himmel]"

("Last Beast In The Heavens") are soaring, rapturous works, which catapult Blau high into the night sky. On the former, he is in hilariously cackling and cackling form, coming on like Death taking a holiday from heavier duties in Ingmar Bergman's *Seventh Seal*. The CD happily includes the bonus track "Das Schaben" ("The Scraping"), an alternate instrumental take of "Der Tod", which lets slip that it's not so much the drugs but the rasping qualities of the piece's scraped metal din that overwhelms them. Their latest album title declares *Silence Is Sexy*, but "Das Schaben" says that noise, done properly, is positively erotic.

Einstürzende Neubauten

Haus Der Lüge
(Sonne Bizzare BART333 CD)

Einstürzende Neubauten Strategien Agamut Architecture II 1984-1990

(Ego/Rough Trade Deutschland RTD1971 2102 2xCD)

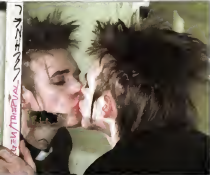
Naturally contrary, the greater the public expectation of an atrocity exhibition from an Einstürzende Neubauten performance, the quieter and more controlled their music became. But the group wasn't so much maliciously defying audience expectations as responding to inner imperatives. Not only did they want to avoid repeating themselves, they were also listening more deeply to what was going on within, acknowledging the physical changes wrought by the pounding punishment they'd been putting their collective body through these past five years. Songs like "Seele Brennt" ("Soul Burns") on the earlier *Haber Mensch* signpost the beginnings of this urge for silence. For all the noisy promise of its title, 1987's *Fünf Auf Der Nach Offenbar Richterskala (Five On The Open Richter Scale, What's So Funny About SFSD CD)* is disappointingly flat. They heavily rehearsed the material beforehand in order to record it quickly and avoid the immense studio costs of *Haber Mensch*. But neither the speed of its recording nor its softer dynamics are the

problem. This is the only Neubauten album that doesn't know why it exists other than as a leaky, half-empty vessel for a great cover version of Bonnie Dobson and Tim Rose's "Morning Dew" and two decent Neubauten originals: the splendid rocker "Ich Bin's" ("It's Me") — in part, Blau's response to accusations of egotism — and the self-explanatory "Kein Bestandteil Sein" ("To Be No Part Of It"), their snister affirmation that they want no part of whatever hole outsiders would consign them to. This theme is taken up in the "Prologue" opening *Haus Der Lüge (House Of Lies, 1989)* where, like Hamlet on ecstasy, Bargeld soliloquizes about how it would have been so easy for them to have sold out to fame and fortune if they wanted to. The ugly yet bracing blasts of



Feed my ego: Bargeld in 1985 (below left) and 1989

noise punctuating his speech constitute their rebuttal of temptation. The declaration sets up Neubauten's most carefully architected pieces. The title track is a fabulous multi-story folly, in which God is left for dead in the attic. "Schweind" is a swirling mindfuck of unstick noise fragments. But in "Der Kuss" ("The Kiss") and the three-part "Fiat Lux", *Haus Der Lüge* contains Neubauten's loveliest moments. The former is a blood-drumming of over-lubed voices and the strange heart fluttering noises triggered by NU Unruh's 'noodle' — consisting of a wire strung between two wooden poles. The latter is charged with a sense of awe that permits the listener, as if concussed, to pass unharmed through the no-strewn second part, "Mafestspiele" — a soundwork constructed from field recordings of a riot in Kreuzberg. In part, *Strategien II* is a well chosen Best Of from the years leading up to the fall of the Wall, which brought an end to West Berlin's privileged status as an island oasis from the stratified Bundesrepublik. Among the previously available stuff, it contains the two indispensable originals from *Richterskala*, plus rarities like "Blutvergiftung" ("Blood Poisoning") — featuring a tape of Blau singing backwards, but played forwards to make his lyric comprehensible. "The mouth is a wound of the alphabet. My screams turn back to lick the wound." And previously unreleased live material. More valuably, it explains the lengthening gaps between Neubauten records. This was partly due to individual members' extracurricular commitments. Hacke was moonlighting with the Australian-German group Crime And The City Solution, whose excellent *Paradise Deschocque* (Mute STUMM78 CD) offers a wonderful, if oblique commentary on the collapse of the DDR and the caving victory of cutthroat capitalism. Mark Chung had set up Frembank, the publishing company and collecting agency Muth was involved in no end of solo group (like Vladimir Estragon, with Phil Minton), theatre and radio projects — one of the best being the Dante Horspiel *Radio Inferno* (Ego 203 CD). And, of course, Bargeld had a second





Tabula Rasa tabulae, 1993

career going as guitarist in Nick Cave's Bad Seeds, the role he secured with the ingenious guitar loop lifted from Elvis Presley's "In The Ghetto" as the musical bass of Cave's cover version. That experience reinforced Bargeid's affinity with song, most obviously evident in Neubauten's interpretations of "Morning Dew" (see above), and Lee Hadewood and Nancy Sinatra's "Sand" on *Strategies II* (also a *Halber Mensch* CD bonus track). In addition, for much of 1987, they were sidetracked by a financial offer they couldn't refuse: to take part in a Hamburg boulevard play. And the two And pieces on *Strategies II* ("Partynummer" and "Lead Und Elend" ["Sorrow And Misery"]) reveal their contrary impulse to be as grating and morose as possible when circumstances require their best behavior.

Einstürzende Neubauten

Die Hamletmaschine
(Ego 111 CD)

Einstürzende Neubauten

Faustmusik
(Ego 501 CD)

The breach of the Berlin Wall in 1989 had its compensations for Neubauten, like fulfilling a long-thwarted desire to play a concert in East Berlin before the People's Republic finally went under a year later. They also got the opportunity to appear in East German playwright Heiner Müller's *Die Hamletmaschine* (1990) on Voice Of The DOR Radio. Bico plays Hamlet, the pair of Gudrun Gut's Ophelia, the pair of them coolly enunciating scraps of text — some of it distantly related to Shakespeare — rapped from the rubble of the 20th

century. The appropriately portentous, not to say downright gloomy music, is an adaptation of a 1998 Neubauten setting of Müller's *Blatzschreibung*, the instrumental version of which is contained on *Strategies II*. *Faustmusik* (1996) was for Werner Schwab's Goethe update, *Faust*. Men Brustkorb. Men Helm, commissioned by a Potsdam theatre and starring Bico as Mephisto. Here he sounds like a shy schoolboy caught in the spotlight trying not to forget his words, but the inventiveness of the group is breathtaking. Their purpose-built instruments — part of a library-like stage set — consisted of mixed up desks, motorised book he-hats, a book shredding machine, and so on. In truth, the disc only affords the slightest idea of the racket they made on the night, but it's evocative enough to start a sound picture in your imagination.

Einstürzende Neubauten

Tabula Rasa
(Mute/Our Choice BETON106 CD)

Einstürzende Neubauten

Ende Neu
(Mute BETON504 CD)

FM Einheit/Caspar Brötzmann

Merry Christmas
(Rough Trade Deutschland RTD19515712 CD)

Bargeid nightly laments the loss of his West Berlin Heimat after it was swallowed up in the rationalisation of Germany's two opposing systems in 1990. One ugly

consequence was the increasingly vociferous racist faction that had been muffled in the East by communist totalitarianism and in the West by embarrassment. The local pride in all things German caused Bico to recoil from the language he had been singing in since the beginning, when it would have been just as easy for him to use English like most other German rock musicians. Rather than retreat from his native tongue, however, he worked the language harder to produce a highly personal fusion of myths, metaphors and cosmologies on the 1993 album *Tabula Rasa*, which was designed as the centre panel of a triptych flanked by the EPs *Interim* (Mute BETON205 CD) and the multilingual *Malediction* (Mute BETON206 CD). As always, his lyrics follow the musical imperatives of the group's rehearsals and improvisations. This is why Neubauten's songs are invariably such a perfect mesh of word, sound and feeling that they can elicit an immediate emotional understanding, no matter how oblique their concept. *Tabula Rasa*'s 15 minute closer "Headcleaner" was originally commissioned as part of a commemorative street pageant, *Eye Of The Typhoon*, blasted out from a vehicle crawling around Vienna's Ringstrasse. So Austrian ratepayers not only had to subsidise Neubauten's loudest noiseless of the 90s, they had to leave town to escape its glorious collage of filthy distortion, cable interference, rampant percussion and a perverse reversal of The Beatles' "All You Need Is Love". "Wüste" began life as a score for Canadian dance company La La La Human Steps. It is also Neubauten's response to the Gulf War, devised out of a studio experiment with the sound of shifting sand and burning, dripping oil.

Tabula Rasa was the swansong album for the Hamburg element of Mark Chung, who wanted to concentrate on Freibank, and Muthi, who was by now a sought-after theatre composer. Impatient with Bico's slowness in completing the lyrics for 1996's *Ende Neu*, he quit. His 1993 CD with Caspar Brötzmann, *Merry Christmas*, is a fiercely exhilarating blizzard of noise whipped up from the Berlin guitarist's feedback and the skeins of sound bled by Muthi from stone and steel. It is undeniably the rawest, most powerful cacophony to come out of the Neubauten camp that decade. But 15 years down the line, Neubauten's heads were elsewhere. The surviving trio of Berliners turned inwards for the reflective *Ende Neu*, which opens with a line barked commentary "Was ist ist?" ("What is is?") and closes with the Kafka-inspired drone work, "The Shift From Babe". In between, there's the dreamy surrealism of Bico's duet with actress Meret Becker on "Stella Mares". It also contains at least one essential Neubauten piece in the onomatopoeic "NNNAHAHHHH", its finely tuned motor mania madness picking up momentum on a classic motorik riff. And the title track is a self-conscious yet witty reaffirmation of intent structured around departing figures in the way the lines drop off in length, a word at a time, from verse to verse, finally leaving just the title "Ende Neu" — in every end a new beginning. C.



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The Octopus Plan
Dorchester 33 1/3
Parker/Guy/Lytton & Marilyn Crispell
Allen Quinvar
Religiosa Project with Peter Schwalen
Requart
Martin Rev
Dean Roberts
Marcus Schneider
Stephen Scott
The Scratch Orchestra
Shabazz
Matthew Shipp
Matthew Shipp Duo with Hot Planet
Patti Smith
Michael Snow
Speedy J
Karlheinz Stockhausen
Cecil Taylor
Ultramar
The Wild Man Band
Jah Wobble & Deep Space
Jah Wobble & The Invaders Of The Heart
Hot new compilations, releases, avant rock, critical beats, club, electronics, hip-hop, jazz and outer limits releases

Arovane

Anti Scrap

ON RECORD 4 CD

With track titles sounding like Latin unknown chemicals and shorthand soundfiles, you'd expect Anti Scrap's debut album from Arovane, aka something Berlin producer Uwe Zell, to be intimidating from first to start. Well, as Dinosaur 1 used to yell, you'd be clean off by the end.

Sure, Anti Scrap features the solemn, hopeful synth swirls and mono-miscel, scratch it said syncretism that have become over-livier from the Autotech/Push Button Objects diaspora. But Zell's ace in the hole is his taste for minimalist reduction. Initially, Anti Scrap showcases an exquisite ear for melody, which gives his music the pat of a toy. Only later do you realise how somberly the tracks end and subside, not finishing but sliding out of your mind, seeping slowly into the next like a disenchanted vapour. The title track is incredibly direct, with its fast octave chimp and bell tones chiming dolorously over a jynk, infamously snarky.

But even here Zell is hardly incapable of the speaker shredding digital distortion so many of his geektronics peers opt for. Anti Scrap is really in thrall to precociousness, both in the flood of sweet self-absorption and in its bright timbre which scatters light like a crystalline Gilder mobile. At 64 minutes, all 11 tracks move swiftly. Zell's instantly simple (crosswaking) patterns have the effect of pulling focus on your ears, drawing you into their warp and weft. "Isosceles 7" bursts into a chiming chorus of music box tones that glint and glimmer in the cold spring of a London morning. On "Steven rue", the cool warmth of its basic, lip pad synth ripples off a second screaming treble, generating a bewitching cloud of gem-like notes, picked out by shafts of light. Listening to the hushed "umbro", you hear the auratic air shrouding the ball sounds. You almost fear for the life of the melodies as they pick their way delicately across the soundfield. Their gentleness, the motion of ice in warm water stays with you long after Anti Scrap is over.

RODNEY EDWIN

Steve Beresford

The Bath Of Surprise

AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Reding shotgun for so many stars, his own star has surely suffered. But it'd be too easy to dismiss Steve Beresford as merely someone

useful, a choice collaborator whose knowledge of the territory allowed others to flesh out their dreams while his own disappeared in a cloud of workaday dust. For sure, he's trodden his share of job puns, soundtracks to biographies of Prince Philip, rying for space on a crowded CV with credits for Prince Far I. The ridiculous and the sublime: one might think, are never far apart, and art is a matter of circumstance of strategic positioning, of timing. Sure of his craft, adaptability is the mechanism of self-remission: opportunity not a rung on a ladder but a ring on a doorknob, requiring an immediate response.

First released in 1980 on the Piano label (The Bath Of Surprise is Beresford solo), he contexted the word of the present that demands fading. We hear him in his bath at the piano in other people's rooms, rummaging around as if through a suitcase of motifs, impatiently sprinting from one locale to another. Fast pinks, prattles and other physical gags punctuate the unwinding of the spoils of a turbulent mind. The seemingly heichized is brought into focus, given shape for the briefest of moments, then summarily squashed in a quadrate display of raw, palpably live pieces. He apologises for making a lot of noise on a guitar, scours himself down with a whistle, attacks a piano, reaches into the secret corner in his head and pulls out a slide display of cross sections of a pulsating brain. All the tracks are short and most end abruptly — judiciously plugging the plug when enough threatens to become too much. There's no studio designer glass, no pomps, no manifesto. It's wild and humorous, but modest and eager to please with a virtuosity prone to explore the imp of the perverse. Throughout, the frenetic negotiation of bathos leads from the solstice pleasures of blowing his own trumpet to the wider world of wanting to make sense, a world on which a merit of melancholy threatens to descend, for here it appears the higher pleasures lie in nonsense. He plays for himself a while, then seems to look over his shoulder when he notices an audience creeping up on him. He moves on with the anagrammatic compulsion of Raelinier.

Beresford is also an encyclopedic perspective crammed with references, with a surfeit of stuff, and there's something a little neurotic about this zany jangling of sounds, this one man band's attempt to swing from one Francis stamell to another searching for a clear and stable landing.

JO PAXTER

Boredoms

Vision Creation Newsam

WEA JAPAN WPC 10049 CD

Last year's "Super Go" single and Super Go album offerings were gone past forward (like Quake's line) — endless, twisted tape loops of psychedelic and Techno tinged dance music that bubbled with the group's special alien humour. If "Super Go" was the detonator to the Super air bomb, then Vision Creation Newsam is the resulting explosion. A clue to where The Boredoms are heading musically lies in the packaging: the little information is scattered around designs referencing the album sleeves of 70s Krautrock producer Roli-Uch Kaser's space-rock collective Cosmic Jokers. The companion party leads into the music itself, which is driven hard by the hypnotic double drum beat of Yosioka and E-Do, while the various vocal and electronic manipulations of Eye and Yamamoto's slammng Ashi Ryo Tempel-hawking guitar crescendos complete the Galactic Supermarket sound fusion.

What makes Vision Creation Newsam unique however, is the extra Boredoms boost that prevents it from tumbling into mere emulation. The almost childlike hyperactive energy surging throughout is so relentless that when the brass are finally applied, the listener is left entranced but slightly unshaken when the real world crashes rudely back into focus.

EDWIN FOURCEY

BTMZ

11 Ways To Proceed

FOR 4 EARLS 1035 CD

Joëlle Leandre Project

Joëlle Leandre Project

LED 1001 CD

Parker/Guy/Lytton & Marilyn Crispell

After Appleby

LED 10013, 34, 14 CD

One of the main sources of continued irony in live improvisation is the fluency of its alignments, the readiness of musicians to plunge into unfamiliar combinations with musicians from widely different backgrounds. Another source is the willingness of improvisors to import new technological resources into alliances with more traditional instrumentation. Derek Bailey encouraged such flexibility in his project Company, which in 1987 included vocalist Carlos Zingaro and

the sophisticated electronics of former Music Electronics Viva member Richard Teitelbaum.

Zingaro and Teitelbaum are now members of BTM2, along with Hans Burgerer on acoustic and electric vocals and Gurner Muller's synergistically coupled drums and electronics. Spiking throughout *11 Ways To Proceed* is the extent to which these improvisatory practices have departed from reliance upon jazz idioms. The linear thrust of jazz blowing has been supplanted in BTM2's music by a remarkable sense of depth. Jazz's often strident individual voicings have been superseded here by a delicately balanced sonic ecosystem. Listening to the group's close-knit sound is like looking at the surface of a pool, sometimes clear, sometimes turbid where strange lifeforms and inoperable objects rise smoothly into view, then just as smoothly vanish.

Teitelbaum and Zingaro sound altogether more vivid as participants in Bassist Joelle Leandre's project recorded live in January 1999. The drummer here is Paul Lowens, whose forthright playing is a long way from Muller's cultivated ambivalence, although they are both intense listeners and have worked together in other contexts. The quartet is completed by the expressively bold piano playing of Marilyn Crispell. Ensemble passages are interspersed with smaller permutations including solos, but individual voicings never disrupt what is a singularly consistent conception extending across nine improvisations. Leandre's take on improvising is informed by her work with composed music; by the likes of Sylvano Buisson, John Cage and Giacinto Scilla. That is surely registered in the dynamic range, structural spaciousness and variety of colours heard in this inspired collaboration. The contribution of Crispell, whose jazz credentials are impeccable, is arguably the most noteworthy element. Her first commitment is to the Coltrane legacy, but her versatility is exemplary.

Six months after working with Leandre, Crispell joined the well-established trio of bassist Barry Guy, percussionist Paul Lytton and saxophonist Evan Parker to record one live and one studio session for *After Apollo*. The trio's capacity to accommodate so strong and dissonant a player as Crispell without sacrificing its vital inner tension is extraordinary. In fact, the pianist's presence audibly heightens the creative play of forces. Parker on tenor as well as soprano has rarely sounded stronger, feeding greedily off Crispell's high-definition articulations, fluent lines

and probing repeat phrases. On the studio album two lengthy quartets are offset by six concise but generally lyrical duets of various mood. The Vortex recording, which ends with a Parker-less trio, foregrounds individual characteristics, but the astonishing ability of these four musicians to tailor their indisputable technical mastery to meet ensemble requirements consistently overwhelms. In full flight the music recalls flocks of birds moving purposefully at breakneck speed yet able to change direction together, in an instant, without colliding. The ensemble's stature approaches the greatest jazz quartets, including Coltrane's, and the record immediately establishes itself as one of the few truly essential recent releases extending jazz tradition.

JULIAN COWLEY

John Butcher

Music On Seven Occasions
[STEAK RECORDINGS]

John Butcher continues his exploration of the outer limits of the tenor and soprano saxophone with these pieces, most of which are first-time duo encounters. An on-the-edge feeling dominates and Butcher's precise technical command never fails to take the

soundcheck

music into sunning areas. Take his collaboration with John Corbett, which pits amplified key work against furive guitar. The two mesh textures readily, producing an instant Cage-like soundworld from one of the most successful dialogues on the CD.

Butcher has no time for flound overblowing his music; often has a dispassionate quality. He brings a surgical attention to his experiments with tones, achieving endless effects with varieties of grating overtones. The scoping croaks (which begin the second disc with piano) Vernon Wagoner don't play with the latter's melodies so much as mark out an expedient territory for investigation. Later while he engages directly with Weldon's beats and turns, the wider noises exist as a backdrop into which he continually folds back his phrases. In a powerful duet with Thomas Loh's belligerent analogue synth, he combines a spiky sound with the mobile melodic demands of the instrument. Just when Loh's humming in with the densest drift, Butcher plays a wonderfully fluid falling phrase.

On a purest quest for impurity, Butcher works the instrument methodically to warp and twist its potential. For this reason the four solo pieces stand out. It's exciting stuff, for performer and listener alike, but irresistible.

WILL MONTGOMERY

John Cage

Dusty: How To Improve Your World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse)

WORLDWIDE 122 020

The eight CD box set is a perfect fulfillment of the incomplete Cage began his *Dusty* in 1965 to celebrate the ideas of grotesque global planner R Buckminster Fuller through a constantly unfolding mosaic of odds, comments, news clippings and ads. Originally composed on an IBM Selectric typewriter using a combination of 12 different typefaces determined by chance operations, it was very much an expression of both the spirit and technology of the times while harking back to the days before established church calendars by substituting ten-pager inserts for the usual Christian dawn.

It was, however, a project that never survived its comic, despite continuing well into the early '70s and absorbing in two of Cage's major collections of lectures and writings for the Wesleyan University Press, *A Year From Monday and N As*, an over-the-hill embrace of new communication technologies, international cooperation and healthy Yankee practicalities. It took a great deal of its momentum as the last surviving years of the Nixon administration turned all such study ventures to dirt. Cage, who was as fascinated by the televised agonies of Watergate as the rest of his fellow Americans, considering it one of the great dramatic art forms of the age—decided to discontinue the *Dusty* until more appropriate circumstances prevailed. He did, on at least

one occasion, express doubts to his students about whether such optimism was not completely out of place in the latter part of the 20th century and was considerably heartened to find that they not only strongly disagreed but actively encouraged him to press on with the *Dusty*. The result was an eight, and final, instalment covering the years 1973-82, which appeared in 1983's *X*, his last Wesleyan Press collection.

All the same, his confidence in human affairs could still be shaken. There are veiled references to the Jonestown mass suicides, and with the 1980s came Cage's acknowledgement that multinational industries were the only organizations truly global in their scope and operations. Wergo arranged for Cage to record the eight existing parts of *Dusty* in Switzerland in June 1991. The varying typographic interests of his text were to be reproduced

stereophonically by changes in volume levels and positioning of Cage's voice across the two channels. Unfortunately his performance here sounds mumbled and subdued and it's hard not to be aware of his advanced age. In fact, Wergo were planning to present him with the box set of these recordings as a special birthday gift the following year. It was to remain, however, an unreleased gesture. Cage died in hospital mere weeks before he would have turned 80.

KEH HOLLINGS

Current 93

I Have A Special Plan For Your World

DEERHOOF 048 CD

You you have a special plan for the world? — the last question a doctor uses to determine whether a patient is psychotic — opens Current 93's most disquieting release to date. *I Have A Special Plan For Your World* consists of one long track, written by novelist Thomas Ligotti, a modern American master of the macabre and narrated by David Tibet beneath the clock of cheap tape recorders warping electronics and mutated speech. Current have worked with Ligotti before, on the in *A Foreign Land* CD and book, but never quite so perfectly as here. The dark inspiration came from Ligotti's discovery of a series of castles, left at random locations around his hometown. With titles like "Sing A Song Of Wellness" and "Devil Plus Tons Equals E=MC²", they revealed the renting and singing of a mysteriously possessed individual. Ligotti had already drawn on them for the story "The Bungalow House" collected in *The Nightmare Factory*, which details the discovery of cassettes in an art gallery describing a visit to an outwardly normal burglar. Each newly discovered tape unfolds a more terrifying chapter, enthralled with the idea. Current's Tibet commissioned Ligotti to write a fictional manifesto of the mysterious tape leaver.

Recorded by Christoph Heermann in Germany, Tibet's voice sounds like he's broadcasting from another time, with his foreboding between arrogant defiance and total resignation over a psychotic soundtrack composed by Nurse With Wound's Steven Stapleton, Andra Dignens and Colin Porter. The project's all the more chilling for the inclusion of some of Ligotti's original cassettes. On first listen I mistook the track number for the late Tiny Tim, as the tape shares some similarities with the Current/Tiny Tim collaboration, "Just What Do You Mean By Anti-Christ?" Indeed, *I Have A Special Plan* harks back to Current circa *Minstrel Night* and though it shouldn't be taken as an indication of future direction, its eerie hall-light is a great place in which to bask.

DAVID KEENE

Zia Mohiuddin Dagar

Bagya Yaman/Raga Shuddha Todi
NIPUS 51014 12 2802

These historic recordings made in 1990 were said to be the last to feature Ustad Zia Mohiuddin Dagar, a leading exponent of the *rudra* *vi*, or *bin* as it's colloquially known — one of the most extraordinary instruments of the Hindustani tradition. It is a limited chordingophone, with seven metal strings fixed to a wooden tube, sounded by two resonant gongs, one located at each end of the *bin*board. Four of the strings are used to produce melody, two are for rhythmic purposes, while the seventh furnishes a drone.

The particular instrument played by Zia Dagar was modified with an additional rhythm string, tuned to intensify the drone. He also departed from convention by plucking the strings with his fingers, rather than using a plectrum, drawing out more fully the instrument's potential gradations of tone. Such refinements enhanced his rare mastery of the elevated compositional style known as *drupad*, which extends a sophisticated vocal tradition dating back to the 15th century.

The very slow introductory movement to *raga* *premanod*, called *file* *ad*, evolved from venerable *drupad* practice. It was a mark of Dagar's attention to fundamental principles that his emphasis fell squarely upon the *alap*, where the essential qualities of the piece are gradually unfurled and developed without musical constraints. His was an unmarred, an utterly translating the possibilities of breath and expressive utterance into the language of ostensibly intricate, heavy *ganga* metal strings.

Raga *Yaman* in particular, with its *alap* extended over 40 minutes, offers a superb example of the great musician at work. He played this *raga* frequently, tirelessly, explaining its potential for extemporisation in the sleeve notes. Philippe Borgeau accurately remarks that Ustad Dagar's playing evokes "the image of a fluid substance slowly flowing back and forth like ocean waves." There is something primordial about the *rudra* *vi* as

sound as it looms hugely through radiant clouds of overtones. Penetrating the purr of two *tamburas*, its microtonal undulations play tricks with temporal flow. Ears that have grown attuned to the eloquent agility of the star or the ethereal pliancy of the cello-like *sarang* need readjustment for the *vi*, hearing the instrument aligned be the technologically modified sounds of much contemporary music is like discovering a coelacanth in a trout net. But, like some of the finest music being made today, it requires and rewards slow listening.

JULIAN COWLEY

Vladislav Delay

Multila
CHAIN REACTION CREW CD

Vladislav Delay

Enfants
HILL PAPERLESS 1990 CD

A natural recruit to Berlin's Chain Reaction roster, Finland's Vladislav Delay adds an intangible extra to the sound laid out by Erolan, Fluson and Porter Ricks. *Enfants* contains four long tracks (each around 20 minutes), two of which appeared on Delay's overlooked debut album on Signa Editions. Disappointingly adding no new material, *Multila* collects all seven tracks from the producer's two Chain Reaction 12's.

Multila is bottled together without gaps, allowing slow whorls and eddies of vapour to unfurl, while flying shards of dub noisat around its opaque rhythms and crumbling structures are shrouded in nevert beaute, appearing like some rippling mirage. "Reamant" skanks through a slow shimmering field of turbulence, while the epic "Heure" opens with trudging, wobbly, distorted kicks that grow outwardly in complexity, its shifting states crumble apart, melting and blurring across one another, pulling brain and body in and out of focus. Foretelling a topical fascination for error-electronics, *Multila* is sporadically littered with loops of interference glitches, jumpcuts and dispaups.

Pushing further, *Enfants* attains depth in the way its blurring dreams are complemented by clicking ticks and digital tears. A major departure from *Multila*, the effect adds an extra layer, intention shifts between macro-focus and macro-snap, a crossroads is formed between the logic propulsion of Chain Reaction and the hard-focus surgery of the clock's cuts crowd. "Notre" unfurls a funk-ska hybrid out of tactile wobble. Meanwhile, while "Poker" adds a cool, chipping bass pulse like a stack CD of crude computer game blips.

Delay's virtual environments leave you suspended within a fluid, rippling domain clicking and scrolling, drifting across interconnecting networks, four-dimensional flows of information expand and contract around the ear. *Multila* poised notice of a

Song mode

Plays through the four beats stored in the pattern banks one after another in a continuous loop.

Stop/Play/Step Rec buttons

Stop, play or put the drum machine into record mode.

This drum machine contains a whole range of drum sounds, and various functions to let you manipulate them. Use it to create complex loops and patterns, or just play around and watch the lights flicker.

Pattern mode

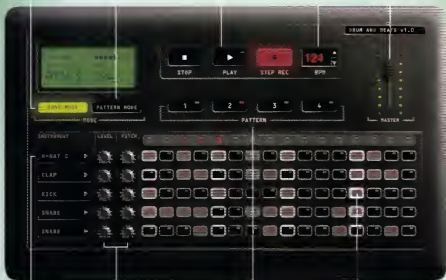
In this mode the drum machine loops through the pattern selected in the pattern bank.

BPM

Sets the tempo of the drum pattern in beats per minute, from slow and mellow to drum 'n' bass.

Master volume fader

Move this up and down, plug in your speakers and hear the results.

**Instrument select button**

Select the drum sounds with this button.

Drum beat switches

These switches activate the different drum sounds you have selected. Each separate switch represents a subdivision of the rhythm, with four subdivisions per beat.

Level/Pitch controls

Adjust the individual volume and pitch of each drum sound with these dials.

Pattern bank

Save up to four drum beats in the four pattern banks. Click on play and then on the different pattern bank buttons to switch between beats, or switch to song mode to play each stored drum beat one after the other. If this sounds complicated that's because it is. This tool is industry standard.

Drums and rhythm: Create the backbone of your music online.

This is just one of the tools BT gives you at getoutthere.bt.com, a site dedicated to helping unsigned musicians fulfil their potential.

Keep this guide and you can use it when you get to the site

getoutthere.bt.com

BT 



Anti-Pop Consortium

Tragic Epilogue

75 ARK 75007 CD

Tragic Epilogue is the first really great HipHop record of 2000. It's also the first proper album by the New York based Anti-Pop Consortium — although there has been a series of intriguingly shady tape-only and vinyl-only only label releases since the group formed in 1997 — and it triumphantly carries the flag for avant-garde hip-hop with skilfully and unobtusively doing all the things that great HipHop has always done, in the process coming up sounding fresh, coherent and bang on the money throughout.

The record opens with a declaration of intent on "Laundry": "Guntalk run New York now, here we run lyrics (yinc) Anti-Pop Consortium's three lyricists — Priest, Beans and M1 Sayid — couple the kind of mindbending, flickerframe free association style that made Raekwon and The GZA pre-eminent a few years ago with a tangible, steely mental focus.

They take on HipHop's urban concerns from all angles, flitting around real experience with dizzying agility, bombarding preconceptions with a postmodern sleight of mind and turning out fresh insights and vivid imagery on a line-by-line basis. They describe their technique as "an ill hybridization of rap and poetry", and they're right. Rhythmically, they're invariably on point, spinning dactylic complexities through concatenations of enjambements, easing off the linguistic throttle for a line or two, then accelerating back in with the icy control of a Formula One jock. It's impossible to encapsulate the energising effect of this kind of density in the cold print of a review, but tracks like "Rinselow" leave the listener trying to catch his or her mental breath under the equivalent of a stinging cold shower.

Wesley, producer Earl Blatze doesn't try to upstage his MCs. His beats are deep and tight, never trying to be flashy, providing a muscular backbone for his satisfying wedges of sombre funk. There are bouts of experimental sample colour — "Eywallow" and "PSA2" in particular are littered with the kind of sparse electroacoustic oddments that made Jeru The Damo's "Come Clean" a stone cold classic back in 1993 — and the record as a whole is swathed in a kind of non-specific, gramy edginess. But it's never jarring and it never feels self-conscious. Blatze is as adept with the sweetly rolling bassline of "Laundry" as he is with the plunging, buzzing distortion of "LIT", propelling tracks of admirable brevity (most clock in at three minutes) through their discrete ploys of light and shade. And there are enough eyebrow raising sonic surprises to sustain interest: from the smeared burst of Britpop that opens "999", to the chunk of The Bushido Surfers' version of "Hardy Gutter Man" that underpins "Here They Come Now", to the soft exhalations of vinyl crackle that sparkle through "Smores", to the daisy-gurgling of a vintage arcade game (Galaxians, fact fans) that breaks numbustously in halfway through "What Am I?".

If you need further recommendation, the guest spots from Kingston's finest HipHop punter DJ Vadim and chart-topping rude boy Pharaghe Monch might provide it. But you shouldn't. *Tragic Epilogue* is a deliberate, focused and downright exhilarating instalment of state of the art music, and like I said at the beginning, the first really great HipHop record of 2000. Do yourself a favour and check it out.

CHRIS SHARP

staggering new talent, uniting two separate tendencies in post-Techno, but Ennin is the groundbreaking, colossal achievement

DAVID HOWELL

Dirty Three

Whatever You Love, You Are

BELLA UNCOMMON CD

Eight years and six albums on, The Dirty Three's profile is still strikingly low. Last year's *UPPERCUT* CD was such a low-key release that most people have never heard of it. Not that it's a great loss: their short-lived success with the dubious production skills of Steve Albini did them no favours. His highly stylised approach

to raw sound really felt like the polar opposite of their deep, emotionally charged wiles.

No such problems with *Whatever You Love, You Are*, which is undeniably the apex of their recorded work so far. The trio of sometime Bad Seed Warren Ellis on violin, Jim White on drums and Mick Turner on guitar has reached such an elevated plateau of creative communication that they put most jazz-innovative groups to shame. Ellis ranks as one of the all-time great live violinists, up there with the Ayler group's Michael Sarason in the way that he wields such ecstatic riffs from an instrument with such a staid reputation. Turner's chords rotate slowly, a safety net for Ellis's lightpiano walk, while White's drums have evolved to the point where he rarely, if ever,

breaks into anything approaching a rhythm, opting instead for colour and crash over blatant shepherding.

Whatever You Love, You Are has a stronger studio sound with Ellis often doubletracking two complementary lead lines. The resultant weave generates textural diversity while upping the emotional ante. In the end that's really what they're about. "I Offered Up The Stars And The Night Sky" starts out with a word cloud of sun, fleeing wiles before glowing into the sun on the back of a repeating phrase, while "Lullabye For Christe" sounds so pained and sorry that the slightest chord change feels positively seismic. Just don't listen to it drunk.

DAVID KEENAN

Dave Douglas

Soul On Soul

RCA VICTOR 096263665 CD

Dave Douglas

Leap Of Faith

ARABESQUE A3141 CD

Dave Douglas is the epitome of postmodern eclecticism in jazz. Profic and versatile, the trumpeter leads many combinations and is a frequent sideman. Most remarkable is his tiny Bell Trio, which is quodlibet transformers, but the quartet on *Leap Of Faith* runs it close.

This is precise, superbly executed music that turns on a dime. With Douglas as tenorist, Chris Potter, bassist, James Genus and drummer Ben Peroway, Douglas's genius lies in creating the impression that you're listening to a larger group. He's adept at playing in exposed situations and filling spaces when he's not soloing. Here his compositions explore some underused approaches found on Ornette Coleman's 60s Atlantic recordings. On the brief "Immemorial" fragments of the theme are stated by the instruments in turn to produce an extended Klingenstein melody. "Another Country" is dirge-like, while the title track is taken at a blisteringly fast tempo. This is an album of daring, fantastic post-bop.

The less uncompromising, more eclectic *Soul On Soul* follows another trend in Douglas's work — paying tribute to great jazz composers. The title refers to Duke Ellington talking about pianist Mary Lou Williams "She is like soul on soul." Williams (1910-81) was arranger and composer for 30s swingband The Clouds Of Joy. An original pianist and composer during bebop, she had some affinity with free jazz — calling her own precursor of the form "zombie music" — and recorded a bizarre duo album with Cecil Taylor in the 70s.

As with his earlier Wayne Shorter and Booker Little tributes, most compositions are by Douglas himself, with just a handful from the composer in question. James Genus kicks up again here, now with master percussionist Joey Baron. The best secret is completed by alternating tenor players Chris Speed and Greg Tardy, Joshua Roseman on trombone and Lin Clark on piano.

The ensemble sound on the opening tracks recalls trumpeter Booker Little (who died very young in the early 60s), with a bitter-sweet lyricism, especially on "Ageless" and the plangent requiem "Carnicle". But the title track has an outlandish Mary Lou style solo piano interlude by the ever versatile Cane, and things move unobtrusively into blues territory with improvisations of Williams' own "Mary's Idea" and "Waltz Boogie". Her "Play It Momma" is a beautifully tight no improvisation for trumpet, bass and drums. This is a much more rewarding brand of eclecticism than the tight-aside ideological jazz as repository of Wynton Marsalis.

ANDY HARTNELL

Dresch Quartet

Riding The Wind
NOVEMBER MUSIC NYR2009 CD

Del-Aldford Saxophone Ensemble

Kalamazoo
NOVEMBER MUSIC NYR2009 CD

November Music's inaugural releases focus on Hungarian music over several generations. From the Hungarian Rhapsodies of Liszt and the gypsy elements in Brahms to the folk research of Bartók and Kodály, this small roster has had a remarkable influence on Western music. In improvisation, however, its impact has been less clear. So these releases help to fill a gap.

Both albums were recorded in Budapest last year. Mihály Dresch, born 1955, is a leading saxophonist on his home scene. He names as influences John Coltrane and György Szabados, the brilliant improvising pianist whose solo album *Time Flies* has also just been released by November. During the Communist era Dresch was into free jazz as an expression of protest, but has since returned to structure and tonality.

He has a very nasal, reedy tone on soprano sax — as Brian Hoxton says in his sleeve notes, he plays it like that single-reeded wooden horn, the *saxoglu*. The other frontline instrument is Ferenc Kovács's voice. The opening track, "Let's Go," switches time-feels. "Sevenly" begins with a gentle adagio of shimmering tones and ends, before developing a lachrymose tale. The most Hungarian track is "Great Plains," with guest Ünlü Bakker on cimbalom, and (presumably) Dresch on what sound like panpipes.

Both the approach and Dresch's compositions are so ethnic in flavour that it's hard to call this music jazz, though István Baló is a superb drummer who swings hard throughout. There are interesting contrasts here with Kalamazoo by the Del-Aldford Saxophone Ensemble (meaning Southern Plains Saxophone Ensemble) it features three saxophonists: Bela Pocok, Barbara, Balázs Székely Dongo and Bela-Szabados Agoston. Morton writes that "at every point, the dynamic of this music is that of jazz." It's true that the music has great rhythmic drive, thanks to fine airtight garde bassist Robert Benko and drummer Tamás Geröly, and sometimes it sounds jazzier than The Dresch Quartet, but often the rhythm doesn't have the essential underlying triplet feel of swing.

Its impression of pervasive melancholy must be to some extent ethnic, and certainly there's great stringency here. It also has the wildness of jazz, more so than in *Riding The Wind*, with furious dances and vocals forming into piercing waltzes. Like that album, there's a lot of rhythmic irregularity, possibly inspired by the so-called Bulgarian rhythms favoured by Bartók.

ANDY HAMILTON

Einstürzende Neubauten

Silence Is Sexy
MUTE CD/SP/183 2XCD

On the 20th anniversary of their traumatic birth, Blixa Bargeld's junkyard orchestra sounds as fallen as ever. Bargeld is still beset with the melancholy synaesthesia of the Romantic, a state of being where everything radiates pulse and meaning, but yet remains out of reach, frozen in its otherness.

Silence Is Sexy (after the title, I know) is haunted by the same "cold radiance" that animated the poetry of Georg Trakl, writing in Germany in the early 20th century. From the opening track "Salerno", where Bargeld is captivated by the aura of a woman "as black as a high pitch on a future scale" — a starkist winter night's tale "through to the final 18 minute tenor tirade of "Peikeland", which repeats a sinister four-line litany of marzipan luscious sensations, from bitter almonds to school glue, over screeching metal and drill, the whole album is animated by the same eerie mistral light. It shines brightest on the lowering contrapuntal, "die Befindlichkeit Des Landes", where a melancholy angelo in the form of Marlene Dietrich — the exile who finally returned to Germany to be buried in Berlin, despite protests from over-zealous German patriots — casts her gaze over "hanging but Laurie nazi", as Blixa greeds with her to reveal "the joy of the land".

Musically the album is all the more disorienting for being so restored, with minimal percussive backing shadowing Bargeld's whispers. His monoword use of English only occasionally breaks the spell — in German his phrasing and accents are confident and agile, whereas in English he sounds too formal and polite. This quibble aside, the album is speckled with sparkling shafts of light, there are the inevitable drinking and dancing songs, where the puns look like clangers on paper, but come alive in performances of real charm. Despite its embracing title, the title track is genuinely funny with nothing but the morose tones of a post-coital cigarette to break the silence before it's rounded off with an atmosphere-punctuating breathal chorus of "silence is sexy". Well, it was. Elsewhere, little glimpses of optimism pierce its most brutal moments, as on "Reduit" which features one of Bargeld's most authoritative vocals. "But death says 'noted to all of human nature'." It enters, suddenly breaking into English, "it comes down here almost to the ground." "Currently placed it might be but that 'silence' is what lies the light in

DAVID KEHMAN

Extended Organ

XOXOX
SUNSHINE BEACHES CD

After jouncing up the bulk of their back catalogue and releasing it all at once in the *Lowest Form Of Music*, the members of 70s avant-garde/noise organisation The Los Angeles Free Music Society have continued to

produce music that is as thought-provoking as it is often nightmare-evoking. As *Extended Organ*, LAFMS's founders Tom Reichen, Joe Potts and Fredrik Nilsson come together to form a supergroup of experimental sound artists. Here the line-up includes line art prodigy and sound artist Paul McCarthy. As a member of art group Goshawk (with Mike Kelley and performance artist Cameron Jamie), McCarthy is no stranger to the outsider elements of rock 'n' roll, and on *XOXOX* his half-human voice adds an extra pulse beat to this organic horror soundtrack. Something deeply unsettling resides at the heart of this music. An alien orchestra humming from beyond the grave causes one to nervously look around if only to check that some cobwebby-wet earth has not been smothered. The combination of Nilsson's gothic baritone organ, Reichen's lurking guitar and effects, together with Potts's "Chopped Optigan" drones (an instrument he customised from dismantled optical samplers) and McCarthy's aforementioned vocal grunts produces an atmosphere of edgy unease, loaded with a strange desire to venture deeper into Extended Organ's slime-soaked tunnel.

EDWIN POWNEY

Flying Saucer Attack

Mirror
DEAG CITY CD 117 CD

A hypoxicomic injection of rampaging sampled beats is not always the best way to reanimate the rotting corpse of Ambient feedback rock. FSA, for those of you with short-term memory loss, are a Bristol-based noise pastoral unit whose first few singles raised rumours of promise back in the early 90s. Perversely, they seemed intent on a quest to wield My Bloody Valentine's *Spacey* in 3 styled guitar feedback to delicately pickled mid-period Popol Vuh guitar. With the hook of depressive vocals by Rachel Brook (now in Movecone) and leader Dave Pearce, they were an ideal proposition for thoughtful, depressive students everywhere. For many their high watermark was in *Search Of Space*, which in the best *Grayfriars* (see *Death*) tradition fused multiple live performances into a murky, grating lo-fi heaven.

Mirror, their first album since 1997's hideously misheard *New Lands* and a disastrous appearance at the Rhode Island Terrapace Festival, sees Pearce add some propulsive sampled beats to half the album, presumably in an attempt to add motion to the essentially static FSA sound. It's a risky experiment, seeing how the greater part of the group's appeal was the languorous drift of loaming guitar noise. Unfortunately though, his chosen beats are doneled and of no interest in themselves — they sound merely tacked on to the guitar washes. An ill-judged Chemical Brothers *Justine* (title) "Chemicals" just in case anyone missed the joke) ends up sounding like nothing so much as an early 90s Ministry track.

The album works best where the samples are toned down, and the ebb and flow of the feedback itself provides a more subtle sense of rhythm. "Islands", based on the traditional "The Captain's Apprentice", and the closing "Star City", approach the brooding, tripping density of FSA's best work.

ALAN CURPINGS

DJ Food

Kalendroscore
NINA TUNE ZENIT CD ZEP

Now a duo of DC and Strictly Kev, following the departure of Iwona Nijes Colotud, DJ Food's latest album marks a quantum leap forward from 1995's *Repeal For Disaster*. Good as that album was, it was firmly anchored in Trip-hop, which is far enough, as these guys all but invented it with their celebrated *Zip Zakes* series of DJ tools. With *Kalendroscore*, they cut adrift from any particular formula and the album is all the better for it. Reference points are dotted all over. Many are far from obvious, and most of these guys all but invented it with their celebrated *Zip Zakes* series of DJ tools. With *Kalendroscore*, they cut adrift from any particular formula and the album is all the better for it. Reference points are dotted all over. Many are far from obvious, and most of these guys all but invented it with their celebrated *Zip Zakes* series of DJ tools. With *Kalendroscore*, they cut adrift from any particular formula and the album is all the better for it. 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Patti Smith
Gung Ho

ARISTA 04618 CD

Over a whacking hop, skip and a crashing jump on Jay Dee Daugherty's drums, a familiar voice rings out from the wilderness, announcing that Patti Smith, the woman whom some in this ahistorical age say is inspired by Polly Harvey, is back. *Gung Ho* is the third album to follow her return to the limelight in 1996 with *Gone Again*, a magisterial work of mourning if ever there was one. That album was a crystallising moment for Smith — it followed the deaths of her husband Fred "Sonik" Smith, her brother Todd, and Robert Mapplethorpe, the artist whose image of her on *Horses* has defined her image since its release 25 years ago. But what now?

There has always been an unvoiced desire for Smith to repeat the shattering creative force that she unleashed on her debut album. Impossibly notoriety/standing. *Gung Ho* isn't it. Instead, it builds firmly on the foundations laid down on 1997's *Peace And Noise*. That's no bad thing. The trademark

Smith sound — vocal lines that curve in an ever-reinforced drama of passion, the rhythmic declamations that produce their insistent authority — has always been thrilling and it's no less so here. The opening "One Voice", and the following "Lo And Beholden" develop their drive with a propulsive force. That the first is inspired by Mother Theresa does something to dent its impact, but then Smith has always been singular in her choice of heroes. (Another song is inspired by a Tibetan nun.)

Smith's strong point has always been in her delivery — rolling, gathering speed, the Dylan-learned drawl — and it's easy to be seduced by her voice alone. Yet the fact remains that Smith's group is a straightforward rock outfit: the perpetual hints of Blue Oyster Cult ring out and at one point, on "Persuasion", you get an absurd, jarring, boy-racer guitar solo. All about the power of the word, Smith's music is ultimately diminished by the intrusion. However, she doesn't necessarily do herself any favours either. *Gung Ho* often sounds as if it's addressing a public meeting: "World's troubles are a global cancer" runs one infectious line, the album ends with an exhortation "Give me one more revolution/One more turn of the wheel". Even "Strange Messenger", a complex song that evokes the slave ships and the shameful past of nations, before detailing the enslavements (hate, drugs) that destroy contemporary communities, fails to hit home with, say, the pure and relentlessly focused outsider fury of "Rock 'N' Roll Nigger".

Does it have to? World peace is a laudable cause, so why does this rankle? Maybe it's because the album somehow signals a move from the specific to the general, because it's difficult, even now, to separate her from her iconic energy; because the Smith experience relies so much on her alone, and no amount from guitarist Oliver Ray, bassist Tony Shanahan, and longterm collaborator Lenny Kaye can detract from that. But then if *Gung Ho* takes some time to fully impress, it's as well to remember that Smith has never been one for the immediate hook. In time, the full intensity of her attack untidily demonstrates that you're in the presence of something extraordinary. Give her one more revolution, a few more turns of the wheel.

LOUISE GRAY

much hear as absorb. "Nevertheless (Sleep Dazed)" is like trying to listen to an orchestra being sucked back through time.

Kobaltoscope presents constantly shifting viewpoints, each one seemingly random yet of a piece with what comes before and after. And like childhood memories, a number of these wits will linger for a long time.

PETER MCINTYRE

Freeform

Green Park
SBS 8024 521 491 CD

London based Simon Pike is obsessed with arrangement, but in his busy calypso constructs there's none of the nostalgia for classic figures — Lolo Schirin, John Barry

Jerry Goldsmith — that keeps cropping up in the work of Sparrow. Ian Simmons. David Holmes or Clement Ochoyane in fact as someone who appeared on the earliest *Leaf 65* *Invincible Soundtracks* you can picture Freeform's up close and personal song images as vividly as today's by the current crop of close-fisted domestic/drama movies such as *Rosario* or *Show Me Love*. Yet even as it offers an intimate insight into the contents of Pike's habitus through a toolbox of macro-mixed everyday sounds — the chaps, whistles and bleats of the modern dwelling — there's plenty of *Last Highway* or *Bring John McVie* here too. If some of Pike's previous output has suffered from too many quips spoiling the broth, this latest shows he's become a much better self-editor. On *Green Park*, Freeform demonstrates his

mastery of portraying the high resolution of everyday life. Tracks like "Tired Of Waiting" and "Twentyfour" will rocket along on Pike's characteristically clattering, metallic rhythms, but generally there's more happening in less time. "Spandax" is the rarest piece here, a loopy melody is surrounded by agile off-centre horn timbres and various scorpings and glichs, but elsewhere he makes use of a large sound palette. "Walk4me" may start off as the Goons on ZTT but few minutes later it suddenly refolds itself into a spry funk sequence with the flavour of *80s Material*. The intro to "Sporing Wheel" ruminates like John Maynard's "One World", as a solitary bassline's homier chimes over sentimental modulating synthpop blobs. "I hope you like it because I like it" sings a prelatized voice (Pike's?) deep in the mix of

the CD's last track. Himself? His computer talking back to him? We hear him shout at it to stop, before a hidden track that crunches the preceding sounds into a few garbled seconds. It's here you realise *Green Park* is not a pastoral peace zone but an enervating maze of exotic topography.

ROB YOUNG

Kenneth Gaburo

Tape Fly
POLUS PRODUCTIONS 021021 CD

Congratulations to Pogus for assembling such a well documented tribute to a marginal genius. American composer Kenneth Gaburo is known primarily, if at all, as a composer of "pure" electronic music, who lived from 1926 until his death, as a somewhat disaffected man in 1993. Tape Fly collects the only extant compositions he made with tape (as opposed to synthesis), and from the opening moments of the *Wisting Of Lucresia*, you know he was a unique electronic music voice — it's a Bacchantean scream-up worthy of The Boredoms, an electric downbroke of speed-up drum kit loops (unusually similar to early *Arctide* breakbeats) and demerolised voices yammering as the cacophony rises to a threshold. Anyone who still finds tape music cold and uninviting should give some of this.

Unlike many electronics pioneers, Gaburo specialised in the voice — his own tapes of children's choir, and on one piece here, French neo-swallower Henri Chopin. His work was often activated by political pressures on daily life — his *80s* multimedia *Scratch Project* dealt with civilian expendability under the nuclear threat. Two of the pieces are direct responses to what he perceived as a dumbing down influence creeping into the college where he worked, and *Mouthpiece* (1992) is a devastatingly sad, apocalyptic spoken word rite on observing a dysfunctional family in a diner. Although the University of California at San Diego gave him resources to compose and teach for most of his professional life, his retirement gift to them in 1974 was *Kyne ORBSFACTORY* a very odd affair in which his own plaintive singing of the "Lord have mercy" text is gradually supplanted into trobly nothingness — much as he felt his own artistic voice had been sidelined by newer and more corporate initiatives such as the commercial sponsorship of music, comics. The inclusion of four non vocal pieces demonstrates a totally other mode. For Harry is a beautifully sparse tribute to Berch, whose theatre piece *The Bewitched Gaburo* directed in Berlin in 1980. He seems to have sampled his own monochord doodlings and out the results together into a shifting domain of spoonbending sonorities. Lennor Dren is a lively miniature that sounds like Joe Zawinul playing a Schoenberg Klavierstück. Re-Burn's touching, moth-flutter synth was the result of a night spent deliberately exhausting himself in

order to trigger the subliminal mind while 1992's *Hiss*, made entirely from a faulty mixing desk, beat today's enervating Japanese-only movement to the punch.

Gibrufo was genuinely ahead of his time: a musical version of what Thomas Pynchon was contemporaneously trying to achieve in literature. *Dante's Joyce* (recorded in the year of the *Corynor* of Los 49) in 1966) creates an acoustic inferno of pinky-perky voices and buzzing tones; the text is the inferno too: the 'jazz' was also a lead character in *Hiss*. His methods as a teacher of composition involved turning his students' heads onto the textures and interchanges of sounds in themselves, not only their patch relationships and tuned structures. That such a fantastically complex trenchant and subliminal musical soul could create such gripping and socially engaged music is testament to that approach.

BOB YOUNG

André Goudbeek Quartet & Phil Minton

As It Happened

WINDMILL 310085 CD

There's never been a better time to explore the rich diversity of play by the veteran virtuoso British vocalist Phil Minton. The last few years have seen a batch of notable releases, including the resuscitation of his outstanding solo improvisations, *A Doughtnut* in North Wales (1975-82), now on Fireman, plus a new solo improv collection, *A Doughtnut* in One Hand (1991), a trio improv recording *Two Concerts*, with saxophonist John Butler and guitarist Erhard Hirz, also on Fireman. *Journal Of Ecstasy* (Victrola), his quartet project based on James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, and more unexpectedly, *Un Uomo* (Blue Tower), a previously unreleased performance dating from 1969 by his Swedish free jazz quartet, where Minton can also be heard playing his second instrument, the trumpet.

As it happened documents a recent encounter between Minton (the vocalist) and a quartet led by Dutch reedman André Goudbeek, a former member of Brotherhood Of Breath and Willem Breuker Kollektief. The improvising is of the non-domestic variety, except the concluding piece "What White House" where Goudbeek's bass clarinet and Minton's alto saxophone are joined by cello and Dr. Wouter's cap-corn percussion. Two discs, "Red Lips" and "Onzekeer", point up the imbalance of abilities on this recording; the remarkable natural elasticity of Minton's vocals outshining Bart Miani's trumpet and the double bass of Peter Jacquot. Elsewhere, too, it's Minton's finely executed contributions that catch the ear as he skillfully works with the other instruments (rather than singing over the top of them), as is the way of too many vocal improvisors, investing the fragmentary to and fro of a rather ordinary quarry with the extraordinary drama and peculiar poignancy of his radical voice.

CHRIS BLACKFORD

Ice Cube

War And Peace Vol II: The Peace

Disc

VEGAS CD/RY 111 CD/EP

The spirit and the true letter of heroic materialism may be long gone, but some of its attitudes linger on. Sure, you may only be able to survive by sipping junk food or drugs at the general populace, but there are still equivalents of the old captains of industry around to inspire, confuse and emote with their example. Ice Cube would seem to have little in common with either Henry Ford or William Randolph Hearst, but he can lay claim to the same exalted status. Today's successful rap artists are like the tycoons of yesterday, expressing similarly grumpy aspirational philosophies.

Right from the get-go, Cube's in a bad mood. I started this gangsta shit" he complains on the opening cut, "and that's the motivation, 'thunk' I get?" With samples namechecking his old Compton outfit N.W.A. and Dr Dre adding his voice to the mix, this is less about resolving old rifts or recalling past glories than a catalogue of grievances from a commercial pioneer who feels he has opened the door to others and been left holding the knob. But then what did he expect, dinner with the President?

Production, courtesy of Dr. Sean Puffy Combs, T-bone and others, is fat and fatty with plenty of kick moves, but *The Peace* (Disc 1) isn't so much a gangsta and club juke as *The Life* (see our 1991 *Digest*). Creditability alone contained less than life-affirming attacks against Jewish managers, homophobia, African-Americans and Korean storeowners, so this latest release celebrates his association with industry hangers on record company CEOs and hustling young rappers. Two entire discs are devoted to attacks on people lying about their wealth and status and possessions. This would be a minor gripe if not for Dre's boast that the authenticity and commitment of his work reside in the fact he's so fabulously rich he doesn't need to make another record unless he wants to. The suspicion that there's something positively Victorian about this argument is only strengthened when Cube starts lecturing at the "little homes" on "Unit We Rite" not to emulate him but to be grateful for their health instead. "Nobody knows the term of a platinum rap star," he means on "24 Hour Hours", a track listing the tribulations of success in such exacting detail that when fellow rapper Krizzbe Bone chides in repeatedly exhaling the listener to "Keep it gangsta y'all, keep it gangsta", you wonder if he can possibly be serious.

KEN HOLMES

Konk Pack

Big Deep

WOLFE CD/EP 101 CD

Here's a busy, skittering, in-your-face blast of an improv record. Konk Pack is a trio consisting of Roger Turner on drums and percussion, Thomas Lehn on decidedly nasty

analogue synthesizer and the perpetually Tim Hodgkinson switching rapidly between tablap guitar, electronics, clarinet and alto sax. The advisory play extremely loud in the booklet gives a hint that this trio weren't especially interested in standing back and giving each other space to explore their sensitive sides. Rather, the emphasis is clearly on physical exertion and speed-driven responses. The impression of a swiftness and exciting assault is further emphasised by the rough edge to the recordings, all taken live in various locations around Europe.

The wonderfully titled "Scuffling Brains" gives the best idea of the dense speed the trio deliver themselves up into. After a few minutes of choppy, fragmented percussion and electronic interludes, Turner metamorphoses for an instant into a samba crew armed with multiple steel plates, as Hodgkinson and Lehn still trying to live down Jim O'Rourke hipping him as "the world's greatest synth player" lay on an evil blast of overloaded synth and electronics. The rest of the disc is marked by similar pleasantly erratic shifts between spaced out stretch and full-on, turning noise. Turner slips briefly from rapt percussion dazed to more straightforward, almost rock rhythms that make full use of heavy bass bombs and cymbal crashes. Hodgkinson is on line form throughout, too, especially on a cut but the wide-angle splitter of Lehn's synths provides the most entertainment. This line trio is all the better for their willingness to get messy and dirty.

ALAN CUMMINGS

Margoo

Edi

WIT 4-BLUE/ED 1014-9004 CD

Using structures and strategies strongly reminiscent of those favoured by sleeky West Coast sand dancers, Italy's Paolo Bruno Margao pulls together loose rhythms and meandering melody lines into an admirable feedback and intelligent collection of compositions. This is strictly loungecore lite easy on the same scale, but none the worse for that. Margao lays down a plebeian combination of guitar and bass, underpinned by drum machine settings that avoid barely cause a flurry in the quest of happy hours.

Over this, a freshened selection of sampled voices, concrete sounds and electronic keyboards are commingled with a sense of humour that is good deal less disarming than it might at first appear. Some of the key solo instruments featured on "Ectoplasma" and "Hawaii" for example sound as though they have been lifted wholesale from the established catalogue of 20th century chamber music. "My Freedom" contrasts polite young things denouncing Italian communism and prating of American-style democracy with the sound of a streetcorner Santa Claus soliciting money from the public. Elsewhere, a breezy samba unfurls lullily around the threats of a manically

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What's opera, doc? Anthony Braxton

Anthony Braxton

Trillium R
BRAXTON HOUSE BHO02 4900

Anthony Braxton's *Trillium R: Shala Fears For The Poor* is the first realization of *Trillium*, a series of 36 autonomous one-act operas that can be combined in any order to form 12 master three-act operas. Given that *Trillium* will be staged and disc (although it is dated 1991), Braxton has discussed this opera complex in interviews dating from the early 80s; it is possible that *Trillium* will be Braxton's *Canos*, a work too vast to be completed in his lifetime.

However, it is more pragmatic to consider *Trillium R* as a self-contained work, and to hear it within the context of 20th century opera rather than as an

explanation of Braxton's three-part model for music, thought and belief systems. It is then easier to discern how the European and American essences of his approach to the theatre of opera dovetail with his decades-long affinity with the post-Webern thrust of concert music.

The allegorical elements of his own libretto and staging (particularly the Der Jovisloof-like costumes of the last act) have a clear antecedent in Stockhausen. Yet, they are outweighed by well-developed themes of unchecked corporate greed, the twin-pronged mass psychology of fear and envy, and the embattled positivism of the nuclear family, which reveal an American social conscious more closely aligned to the Kurt Weill-Langston Hughes treatment of Elmer Rice's *Street Scene* and Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*. Likewise, the German tinged forbidding of the nearly four hour orchestra score is overshadowed by Braxton's writing for voice. Despite the treatise-like quality of his dialogue, he goes a step beyond creating singable parts for his soloists, particularly in the first two acts (which respectively depict Shala's boardroom protest and the departure of a son from home and its aftermath) in which Braxton articulates his own dramatically cogent brand of rhetoric. This quality is given an explicit American tilt by his nine principal singers, almost all of whom lack the constrained throatiness that haunts contemporary American opera. The most radiant of the lot is soprano Lisa Bielawa, whose relaxed power allows her to gracefully nail treacherous passages of dialogue and octave-plus leaps. As Virgil Thompson might say, Bielawa's Shala is the most appealing socialist to appear in music theatre in years.

It is impressive how much singing there is in *Trillium R*. With the exception of the second act, at least eight of the principals are on stage throughout the entire opera. While there are occasional interludes for the orchestra and strategically placed instrumental solos,

Braxton did not build lengthy rests for the principals the way John Adams did with *March Of The Women's Company* in *Alton In China*.

Trillium R may place an emphasis on contemporary vocal music, but the orchestra score nevertheless continually gifts with Braxton signatures, ranging from hovering strings to staccato reed phrases. Generally, the score is built upon sound events rather than explicit thematic materials; the most notable exceptions are the spooky theme that opens and closes the opera and an Act III chorus signalling the end of the threat of plague. Its triplet-based cadence falls far short of alidness, yet compared with the rest of the score, it has a disarming sing-song quality.

Braxton's instrumental solos are an interesting mix of New Music stalwarts (double reed players Joseph Celi and Lizzy Van Cleave), jazz veterans (cornetist Perry Robinson and soprano saxophonist Mark Whitcage) and younger downtowners, some of whom studied with Braxton at Wesleyan University (trombonist Steve Swell, flautist Rob Brown, bass clarinetist Brandon Evans, and saxophonists David Bindman, Rob Brown and Aaron Stewart). They consistently provide pungent sidebars to the unfolding drama.

Unfortunately, this well-appointed box set presentation — which features a 68 page booklet including the complete libretto and an introductory Braxton essay — is marred by engineering gaffes at the beginning of the performance. Once proper levels are attained, this is an acceptable recording that conveys the singers and the musicians as a unified whole instead of isolated elements that co-exist on tape. Regardless, the release of *Trillium R* is a major event that merits the close attention of anyone with a serious interest in the music of Anthony Braxton, opera or the ever-blurring lines between musical idioms. The rewards of this important work may not be immediate to many listeners, but they are sure and lasting.

BILL SHOEPMAKER

superior Daffy Duck and the preeminent spunking on "Yellin' (Awww, Juvenile)" and "Weird" is soundly underused on the album's closing monologue, "How To Use The Bathroom In Space" in which a rather condescending NASA technician explains the intricate logistics involved in taking a zero gravity slash. With some twisted instrumental stunts such as "Lavabo" and "Accan", to unravel as well there's still plenty to occupy the patrons' minds long after the bar has closed.

KEN HOLLINGS

Kevin Norton

For Guy Debord's (in Nine Events)
BARKING DOG BARKING LT

Evoking the name of Guy Debord — founding Situationist, author of the *Society Of The Spectacle*, blaring voice of the May 68 Revolution — and printing a photograph of

Louis Lull-Cans and scabbed collaborators on the sleeves of *Pine* on the cover of a CD sets a heavy agenda. Add in slogans that attempt 'Grai' Marcuse-style to summarize the Situationist critique from an American angle: ideas patronizing a lion and you're heading for trouble. Swimming against the current of this presentation, however, is Kevin Norton's winning music — maybe because multireeds Anthony Braxton is aboard.

As if in tribute to Braxton's 1969 album *This Time* (the most accurate, most direct, least theoretic expression of May 68), Kevin Norton — Braxton's percussionist of choice for the last five years — dedicates his music to Debord, thus positing free jazz as part of the revolutionary process. Rigorous musical thought conveyed by straight instruments cuts through ethereal twaddle and cyber twiddle to the real issues of the epoch: too many dreams of transcendence in the virtually bound crumpled. Here's some overtaken actuality!

Intimate events, recorded at the Transatlantic Festival at the Greenwich House Music Center in 1998. Ken Norton plays drums, vibas and gongs. Brandon blows soprano, alto and contrabass clarinet, and there are bass and cello solos by Joe Fonda and Tomias Ulrich. David Bindman and Bob De Bellis play flutes and reeds. Norton's untaken suite — lasting an appropriately hard-to-market 37 minutes

— has different members of the ensemble step forward to give their version of the music under scrutiny. Mutual Richard Abrams style.

As a composer, Norton doesn't emulate the complexities or the brain-boggling millefeuille layers of Braxton's scores. Indeed on the opener "Norton's most on vibes is pretty much 'Angie Bells'." When Braxton's scores contribute clarinet at someapping similes from vibes and flutes in "Endemic Characteristic" it's like Asger Jern pointing part across some true and lethally of painting, an alert and discovering vast fields for play in inaudible

"(de)signs of something (in)representational: this representation-bound and any touches on unconsciously. One wishes this is what Norton wanted and the effect is staggering. On "Deixis" (the title indicates events within the same rather than different times) Norton pushes bowed string melancholia to the brink of sarcasm. Braxton's overblown soprano echoes the metallic scrape of his cymbals (depicting an invisible) that number crunches harmonic possibilities like a silicon chip. Brandon responds to the specific sounds he hears (not other note values). Unlike the folklores who confuse art with healing alternatives, Braxton's solos mean the sickening velocity of mass weaponry. Forcing attention on anxious traits. His stance is that of the exultant chain jabb at the structure he's bowed in. The precision and invention of his ideas are scary, yet supremely logical. If he's occasionally abrupt and crude, it's the violence of the materialistic genius.

soundcheck

becoming subsumed by its jagged-but-velocity.

The duo-disc with violinist Hani Marini, on the other hand, allows much more space for Shipp to spin out his bold, melodic inventions. The highlights are heavy in Coltrane homage: Shipp's arrangement of the traditional "Greenfields" mirrors Coltrane's adoption of its lush, simple melody, making it a perfect showcase for the way Shipp applies a knowledge of geometry to even the simplest chord statements, of even the simplest of lines, being strung through to the folk truths at their core. He's a truly free player in that he's not afraid to simply restate the actual melody, like he was returning to it for a breath of air before going back under that "Hani Marini" is every bit as soul-fused, drawing somberly one minute, skirting icy patterns across Shipp's chords the next. The set ends with a beautiful solo reading by Shipp of Coltrane's "Naima," where he drops nagging, slumbering notes into the flow before letting go at the final refrain.

DAVID KRAMER

Alim Qasimov

LOVE & Deeply Ocean
NETWORK 34411 CD

A remarkable vocal talent, Alim Qasimov is the Nasir Fatihi Al Khan of Azerbaijan, the Caucasian country bordering Georgia, Armenia and Iran. To roam the compass home, his first track here is a tribute to Nasir, "When I heard him in concert." Qasimov recalls, "many doors were opened for me and many questions answered." The Azerbaijani tradition is called Mugham. The singer himself plays a frame drum known as a *daf* and is accompanied by tar (long-necked lute) and *kamancha* (fiddle). Eager to free up and develop the tradition, Qasimov here expands his group to include his daughter as a second voice, more drummers, *clonnet* and the exquisite double-necked *balaban* (known in Armenia as a *duduk*). With great flair the group tackles folk songs, ghazal poems, instrumental improvisations and lengthy epic ballads. My quibble is that Qasimov totally dominates the group, and that he has only one emotional state, which is passionate

turned up to 11 on the *daf*. His presence permits no light and shade—even when singing a folk ditty about losing an apple in the air, Qasimov makes everything a matter of life and death. It is certainly technically impressive, but over 70 minutes it is somewhat emotionally numbing. The only other Azerbaijani Mugham group I've seen are the excellent Jabbar Karagöyü Ensemble, who played London last year. Interestingly, the dynamic of this trio was completely different—the *kamancha* player was unmistakably in charge, and the singer, while totally convincing, performed his end of the business with modest decorum. It is possible that Qasimov's international acclaim, including the Award of the 1999 IOC-UNESCO Music Prize, is distorting the role of the singer in this intimate and ancient tradition?

CLIVE BELL

Reigakusya/Eno with Peter Schwalm

MUSIC FOR CHIMMY-1
JVC/VICTOR VPCD50 2620

An intriguing project to say the least, *MUSIC FOR CHIMMY-1* brings together the oddest type of music in Japan—*gagaku*, from the Heian period—manga artist Reiko Okano's illustrations of Heian court life and a story by novelist Bakus Yumakura. The traditional ensemble *Reigakusya* were commissioned to perform a musical interpretation under the direction of Sukekazu Shibata on one CD, while Brian Eno has contributed a quite different interpretation on a second CD. The project's title is almost impossible to translate but could mean *MUSIC FOR THE HEAVENS*. The whole is packaged in an amazing semi-holographic silver and clear plastic wrap-around sleeve. Reiko Okano would appear to be the instigator of this bizarre and rather beautiful project, though as the sleeve notes are all in Japanese it's difficult to be exact. In any case it is a gorgeous affair: rich and sensuous, and redolent of a bygone era yet also somehow strangely modern and vital. The 25 piece *Reigakusya* are a superb ensemble. The combination of traditional

instrumentation—sho, *hichiriki*, *nyuteki*, *wa*, *didoko* and something called a *wagon*—and voice is beautiful in the extreme. The effect alternates between small and intimate, like a meeting between two courtesans in a tatami room, and grand and opulent, as befitting a shinto ceremony in a capacious courtyard. The excellent production benefits from quirky little touches here and there: an exquisitely engineered harmonic wailing to the end of a phrase, a laugh out of the blue, modern touches to ancient music. No wonder Eno was drawn in.

His 28 minute contribution is around a third of the length of Reigakusya's opus, but the quality is just as high. When the request came in from Okano, he was already working with Peter Schwalm (of Slop Shop), with whom Eno jammed at the Suzzi 101 Rebeusculat exhibition in Germany in 1998 on another project, but they temporarily took time out to fulfill this one. Triangles, pictures and other source material were dispatched from Japan. Kyoko Inatome, a waitress in Eno's local Japanese restaurant, provides the vocals, although these are slowest processed to such an extent that they sound utterly otherworldly. The result is a track of soothing, sensuous space-jazz, improvisative and collaborative projects like this are perhaps the ideal musical course for Eno these days, and this is certainly a worthy addition to his oeuvre.

DAVID ELLIOTT

Martin Rev

STRANGE WORLD
SANDWICH CD

Martin Rev might not be topping too many new barriers, but the rhythmic and lyrical ghosts he summons up have an indelible haunting quality. On *Strange World* Rev is both instrument and voice. Long acknowledged as the silent partner of Suicide (the persona of Rev as pop vocalist is a mildly shocking surprise. Coming across as a 50s heartthrob who has been mysteriously hooked up to a pulsating bank of beepboxes, drum machines and keyboards, the tones of softly intoned sode shop songs are obviously close to the

heart of their creator). In the same way that Frank Zappa paid grossy homage to the doo-wop of his teenage years with *Groovin' With Reuben & The Jets*, here Rev tenderly shows the hallucination of his past into the present.

Elsewhere elements of early Suicide slide into wraith on the chilling "Chucky," while "Solitaires" roosters with drum shots before returning to another heavily echoed, yet ethereal pop ballad. As the title suggests, this is a seriously strange record, but it confirms Martin Rev's status as a solo performer pleasing of an audience made up of more than just Suicide fans.

EDWIN POUNCEY

Dean Roberts And The Black Moths Play The Grand Cinema

INNOVATEL 4010 CD

At the start, it's easy to see the appeal of Dean Roberts' latest adventure for the post-structuralists at Mile Plateaux towers (Barnes) is an offshoot of the Frankfurt School. It opens "The Fake And The Detached" soon metamorphoses into a bizarre mélange of psychedelia and post-rock metaphysics. It starts out as a dick-label tickle of cracked snare, delirious in the very best post-modern style. Black Moths sees Roberts depart from the more drone-oriented guitar work he presented with Thela and White Winged Bird. Here, he explores an organic wonderland of the transformed official shrieks of rock music. Without a break "The Fake And The Detached" becomes a breathy alarm bell fuzz. In turn, this provides the unlikely bedrock for a cover of Brian Eno's patient anti-materialist housewife anarchy, "Giddy Tells Me." It's at once recognizable in its opposition to tuneful singing and unrecognizably altered. Roberts' compositions are crucial to the whole album. If it's not always easy to spot the contributions of Charles Curran on cello or Matt Valentine on bass, the presence of Tim Barnes (someone collaborator with Alan Licht and Jim O'Rourke) is far more vital. Barnes' percussion is a constant presence, whether



Matthew Shipp
The Multiplication Table

Shipp's music explores his own thought processes, and in this lays out a physical trail reflecting the way the three players think along with each other. Following those thoughts leads us deep into a new jazz style that has sprung, like *Abuse* from the bow of Zeus, out of the body of jazz preceding it. The new relativism in the family looks free already, and seems likely in the future to astonish us with further mighty feats.



Matthew Shipp
The Grand Cinema

M. Shipp, facing the shady forces, plays curves as though the light defines the shadow, but the shadow represents the light's absence. Typistic winces in the air of a barrel of water. Psalm—soft, buoyant, round and transparent, like round, perfect, beautiful bell vibrations bouncing in an atmosphere of risk. Rain on the mist leaves, cool sun behind mist leaves shift, divine sleep coats the mist leaves across the sun, against the power of our Shipp's like harmonic delirium. But the eye is receptive, the divine elegant function of language.



Matthew Shipp
The Grand Cinema

Shipp conceives of *Greenwood Systems* as the recording debut of a unique engineering configuration... With *Greenwood Systems*, Shipp steps up a lively conversation that promises to have listeners occupied well into the next century.

knocking out pulse rhythms on "You And The Devil Blues" or adding a darty shimmer on "The Graces Of Streets." Elsewhere, Barnes adds sonorous harmonium while assisting on electronic processing duties.

Roberts adds piano, viola and organ to his more customary guitars, but he is such a flexible instrumentalist that the tools are rarely relevant. Retrieval file the album under electroacoustic music, which is as appropriate and meaningful a badge as any it brings to mind. Faust also show a similar ability to blend the surgeon's tape-collage scalpel with the instincts of the improviser. Roberts, however, retains all of Faust's organic energy without ever plunging off down some ramshackle dead end.

And The Black Flies Play The Grand Cinema is a tremendous achievement. Everything fits. It's less of an attempt to blend genres—post-rock, prepared guitar, Improvisation—than a demonstration how, for the truly imaginative, genres remain utterly meaningless. Roberts has always had a fine ear for sonic exploration, but *Flies* sees him on peak form. Even when he leaves the instruments to drop, their individual character and anticipation are as tantalizing as the appealing density of their combined harmonies. On this album the overall essence is truly for more than the sum of its parts.

BRIAN GULLUD

Marcus Schmickler

Sator Rotos

A MUSIC RING CD

The cover of Marcus Schmickler's new release, *Sator Rotos*, like 1997's *Wala Sola*, features small isolated images that float on empty backgrounds, making crisp and elusive connections, drifting closer only to disperse once more. Meanwhile, his more accessible Pluramot releases have a completely different relationship to visual and aural space. Their covers are dense mosaics of popular cultural images, and the music similarly collages sounds and instruments to construct a saturated sonic field.

In some ways, *Sator Rotos* could be a second instalment of *Wala Sola*. If the latter dealt with the abstract, then *Sator Rotos* is its physical counterpart. Rather than trying to musically represent a phenomenon like shifting tectonic plates, Schmickler takes them as formal processes and enacts them musically. Distant atmospheres are conjured up in the smooth glowing tonalities and resonances of the CD's opening. Gradually the material spaces are filled by waves of strings, and different sorts of sounds are introduced until the harmonic balance is crowded out by dense frequencies and percussion. Everything in the soundscape has to compete for space. Pleasing patterns of static build up to a molecular chaos resembling bottles clanking along a conveyor belt. Predictably enough, this reaches a point of explosion where the



Chris Cutler & Fred Frith

Two Gentlemen In Verona

ISH GOLF CD

Fred Frith

Stone, Brick, Glass, Wood, Wire (Graphic Scores 1988-86)

DISCO D'AMERICA DAD14 ZRED

Fred Frith & Ensemble Modern

Traffic Continues

WINTER & WINTER 910044 CD

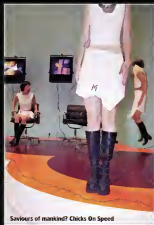
As a founder member of Henry Cow back in 1968, guitarist Fred Frith can scarcely have imagined that he would start the 21st century as Professor of Composition at Mills College in Oakland, California. His route has been oblique: Art Bears and solo work; dabbling with The Residents; passing through Material and Massacre with Bill Laswell; and Naked City with John Zorn; and honing his writing skills on impressive projects for dance, film and theatre. But it seems appropriate that the release of recordings which unequivocally confirm his compositional credentials should coincide with the issue of a concert recording made with Henry Cow drummer Chris Cutler. It's a timely reminder of a crucial, formative and long-lasting partnership with an equally significant and catalytic musician. Their meetings invariably suggest a pair of bantastic alchemists cowering in their workshop, joco-seriously searching for a key to transmute base materials. For this engrossing concert, staged in Verona in April 1999, Cutler is credited with "lotsam", along with electrified drums; Frith supplies the jebam, as well as electric guitar. The crude stuff is cast into the alembic along with more refined material. Thankfully, their subtle sublimation never delivers the immutable element that would end their search; rather, it leaves a residue scorched by magnesium flares and shrouded in sulphurous fumes, eliciting occasional maniacal cries from Frith. In the course of the performance, their

playing and listening experiences over three decades are pulverised and reconstructed. Cutler, flailing arms inscribing arcane geometries, oversees the vessels; Frith fills them with molten metals and fizzing granules. Musical ideas continually change state, while a shared understanding takes form between the players. The entire process, out through with quicksilver volatility, culminates in a teasing, slide-driven blues, taking us back to where Frith's enthusiasms began.

Meanwhile, on *Stone, Brick, Glass, Wood, Wire*, Professor Frith contains his mineralogical interests within graphic scores. These compositions, made between 1986 and 1996, were devised under the conceptual influence and practical example of John Cage and Earle Brown, and of Cornelius Cardew's landmark *Treatise*. Photographs, with minimal verbal instruction, serve to steer the participating musicians into the enabling constraint of interpretative obligation. Sometimes there are stipulated time bands, suggested instrumental combinations, or specified dynamics. Still, the image presides over individual and collective response, producing very different results from free playing (where constraints are less tangible, if equally real). Frith's minimalism is shrewd: the visual images he provides imply textures and degrees of density. In effect, as these festival recordings from the early 1990s show, they encourage performers to approach sound as physical material to be worked upon, to strive for plasticity and tactile values. The core trio of Frith on guitar and violin, Iue Mori on drum computers and harpist Zeena Parkins is adept at such shaping and texturing. Augmented in various combinations by members of what Frith calls The International Occasional Ensemble, a sizeable pool of musicians which includes percussionists Chris Cutler and Han Bennink, accordionist Guy Klucevsek, saxophonists Hans Koch and Jean Derome, and pianist Myra Melford, the results carry equal conviction.

Frank Zappa finally got the responsive orchestral resource he always wanted when the Ensemble Modern gave its total commitment to his piece *The Yellow Shark*. Now that immensely accomplished and justly respected German group has granted its imprimatur to Frith's work. *Traffic Continues* was commissioned for the Klangspuren Festival in Austria, and received its premiere in 1996. The piece has a cellular structure, allowing improvised sequences to be interlarded with composed passages. The composer is once again in action as performer, in the well-established trio with Mori and Parkins, but Frith's signature is everywhere evident in his writing for ensemble, in melodic fragments, rhythmic patterning, and favoured orchestral colours. The other piece on this disc, *Traffic Continues II: Gusto*, commemorates cellist Tom Cora. Frith elaborated the composition around samples of Cora's singular playing, making space within his own work for recollection of a lost friend and partner in the group Skeleton Crew. It encapsulates the spirit of Cora's approach while marking a further stage in Frith's own musical adventure. As a tribute, it is heartfelt without sentimentality; elegiac, it transcends sadness and nostalgia. Taken together, these records affirm that, through changing times, Fred Frith has remained an irrepressibly positive presence in contemporary music making.

JULIAN COWLEY



Saviours of mankind? Chicks On Speed

Chicks On Speed

Will Save Us All

CHICKS ON SPEED RECORDS 001 CD

According to the lighter elements of the consumer press, Chicks On Speed currently represent 'the future of pop music'. But despite the fact that this is exactly the kind of expansive, over-excited and fundamentally meaningless bollocks that keeps these borderline morans in urban leisurewear, rein in your contempt for a moment — there's an element of truth in the claim.

For a start, it doesn't take a genius (any Spice Girls fan or major label marketing apparatus will do) to work out that the future of pop music will somehow manage to find a place for presentable young women endowed with that easily applied and quasi-fictitious commodity known as 'attitude'. And Chicks On Speed, as their knowingly dumb-but-smart moniker proclaims, couldn't have shaped themselves more effectively for that familiar spectacular role. Not to mention the fact that the future is bound to see the line between commerce and ideology — always a line in pop music — further blurred, not least by products like Chicks On Speed's nifty line in patent paper dresses, available to punters, disciples and commodity speculators at a recent London gig for no less than \$80.

And the music? Well, nowadays, nobody expects the future of pop to sound like anything except its past — hey, it ate itself, remember? So, Chicks On Speed score here, too — their particular debt having clearly been New Wave synth pop (1978-84). Nobody else seems to be regurgitating that particular epoch at the moment, which is close as pop gets to originality — hence those glossy magazine features.

Exhibiting textbook postmodern insurance, Chicks On Speed are happy to apostrophise their influences clearly. Their album is littered with cover versions — 'Give Me Back My Man' by The B-52s, 'Warm Leatherette' by The Normal, 'Kalttes Klare Wasser' by Malaria, 'Mind Your Own Business' by Delta 5 — whose pinhead digital fidelity will do little but bemuse those familiar with the originals, but whose presence, one assumes, is intended to lend a bit of historical urgency to the radical project proposed by a dayglo banner title like *Will Save Us All*.

The problem, though, is sharp contrast to say Atari Teenage Riot, is that there isn't any real urgency here. The presence of Viennese dance producers like Christopher Just and Gerhard Polznicz delivers crystalline clarity and a pristine sheen which is only occasionally enlivened by artful doses of robotic pitchbending and sporadic snippets of wayward sample texture. But rough edges, breathless naivety, loudness, distortion, all those vital signifiers of engagement and passion — these have been diligently removed to leave a product devoid of rough surfaces, supplying only an arch, ironic detachment which occupies a zone only a hair's breadth away from out and out kitsch.

Lyrically, there's a similar frustration. 'Glamour Girl' is typical of the self-generated material: 'She's a glamour girl, she stands so still/Wears a feather bra, her hair's so bright/stands to sway when she brushes her teeth/Five times a day/Burlesque attitude, nighttime throb/She's a glamour girl and her look just kills/Beware of her kiss she'll suck you in/Five times a day.'

This is neutral to the point of being vacuous — almost meaningless — and it's the same story with tracks like 'Little Star' and 'Yes I Do'. There's nothing wrong with being meaningless, of course — unless you're claiming to offer more than that. And Chicks On Speed have promised to Save Us All.

So, judged by the standards of pop music — that is, by the standards of the slickly packaged consumer commodities that have been trooping in and out of the charts for the last 40 years — Chicks On Speed have put together a pretty good product. Maybe they really are the future of pop music. If that's good enough for you, you know what to do. But with music like this, they're not going to save anyone from anything at all.

CHRIS SHARP

chairs is suddenly smothered by raw frequencies that flatten the sonic field and then feather to nothing.

BEN BORTHWICK

Stephen Scott

New Music For Borrowed Piano

NRB ALBION NA107 CD

When it first appeared on vinyl in the early 1980s, Stephen Scott's album sat comfortably in the New Albion catalogue alongside the gradual, impressionistic minimalism of John Adams's *Light On Water* and Ingram Marshall's *Fog Trapes*. Belatedly ressed, the 'new music' is, as Scott acknowledges, 'frozen in the style and technique I could muster 20 years ago', with the influence of Steve Reich, whom he had met while researching music in Africa, distinctly to the fore. But its surface attractiveness remains, and its combination of rhythmic precision and harmonic voluptuousness is brightly realised.

Reviewing a Scott concert for *The Village*

Voice in 1981, Tom Johnson remarked upon the theatrical aspect of the performance, with ten players 'all huddled around the guts of a grand piano'. These musicians were equipped with nylon fish line or with small bows fashioned from rounded hornhair and pacalike sticks which they rubbed against the instrument's strings. Scott rescued the piano interior from being merely the scene of colossally effects and cooed, as Johnson put it, 'a very special kind of expressive playing that is not quite like any other'.

Scott has subsequently released two further CDs on New Albion: One couples Menzies's *Web* (1985) and *The Iron Of Note* (1986) in many respects his most accomplished compositions for the borrowed piano. The more recent *Wings Of The Sunrise* is by comparison programmatically overblown. But this first showcase for his innovation, free from the later works' obfuscatory layer of mythic or epic pretension, evinces a freshness and excitement at the sheer range of the instrument's sound, from accordion-like reediness to sonorities usually generated

solely by electronic means. There is surely much more exploration of the potential of the ensemble-bowed piano still to be done.

IRAH COWLEY

The Scratch Orchestra

Scratch 1969

DE SPAD 0523 10

David Jackman

Latins

DE SPAD 0517 71

Who knows how this unusual recording made at the first public performance of The Scratch Orchestra at Hampstead Heath Town Hall, 1 November 1969, found its way to De Spad's label in Bremen 30 years later? The limited edition 10" (600 copies) gives no title of pieces, list of participants or other performance details. However it's a great chance to hear Cornelius Cardew's anarchic improvisatory ensemble in full disorganised swing. Founded in 1969, and partly drawing its members from the experimental music

class Cardew ran at Honey College, The Scratch Orchestra numbered about 50 participants, many of them amateurs attracted by Cardew's non-hierarchical experimental manifesto. At the time — before Cardew's 70s aim to 'flatten' the orchestra was a vehicle for fostering anarchic individuals and self-discovery among the participants. With or without a score, each player determined his or her responses to the general level, and every gesture — musical or not — was to be given equal weight.

The record has a musical fragment on each side. One generates the hubbub of an 18th century madhouse scene: broken utterances of brass and wind mix with whoops, repetitive pipes and yowls, shufflings and the odd clank. High and low mingle in a haphazard and primitive meabrom — a burst of bassoon inspires someone to blow on a reed or begin some boneless keening — however the myriad sound events seem to coalesce within some inscrutable logic all the same. As Cardew commented after a stint improvising with AMM in 1967 'You project yourself into a seething mass of

chastic portrait and see what action that suicidal desire precipitates." The other piece has a more homey aspect and may be an example of *The Orchestra's* "popular classics" style in which parties of song, voice and gramophone recordings were used as a prompt for participants to pool their various associations. However intransigent their individual sounds the result is actually rather quaint, like a Christmas party on adjoining wards in an old people's home with the TV blaring. The music hall references make it as eccentrically English as an *Enfants* comedy.

David Jackman joined The Scratch

Orchestra in 1969 and continued with his own minimalist experimentation from the mid-70s on, adopting the name *Orgnum*. "Laws" is a new recording built around the kind of lush, orchestral strings you might find midway through a late 19th-century Russian symphony. However, the sweeping chords have a deranged quality, as if various parts have been recorded backwards, eliciting a haunting, suckled-in quality. You can't put your finger on what's going wrong, but the sound comes out in a drunken repetitive swoon, like someone trapped inside a giddish ball.

MATT RYTON

Michael Snow

Snow Solo Piano Solo Snow
 CHERIE PATTONS CHERIE PATTONS 3018019 3900

Although he is probably best known as a conceptual film maker, the Toronto-born and based Michael Snow's artistic work takes in sculpture, photography and installation. However, since 1976 he has been playing bi-weekly concerts with the free improvisation ensemble CCNYC, who toured recently in Europe with the godfather of plunderphons John Oswald on saxophone, and Paul Dutton on vocals. Unlike the 1998 CCNYC live disc on Visto, or the triple LP odd Larry Dutton And The CCNYC Music Family 1979, this new set gives a rare opportunity to hear him solo.

The first three of these three themed discs contains three pieces alleged to have been recorded by Snow in 1948 and 1949 (if these are starting evidence of prodigy (Snow would have been 19 or 20 years old) and playing piano for around a year or so) or they are more recent recordings dressed up with vinyl crackle (if the latter, then it wouldn't be the first time Snow has pulled this trick, his elaborate and extraordinary *The Last LP* (issued in 1987, and recently re-released by Art Metropole) consisted of fake ethnic recordings he created entirely in his studio (either way, these three short pieces are pious slices of boogie woogie).

After a tremendous rendering of Jelly Roll Morton's "Mame's Blues" we're straight into the longest piece of this triple CD set, the 45 minute free-wheeling improvisation "Around Blues." Here Snow moves effortlessly between adept improvising around a tune, to more abstract flights of fancy. Like Glenn Gould Snow is predisposed to inventivity.

localisation—giving an extra human touch — and like Steve Beresford or a younger Alia Haggins, he's romantic and playful. "Around Blues" and the remainder of the music on the first two discs were recorded live in concert from 1985–96. While the first CD concentrates on recordings illustrating his debt to early blues, jazz, slide and boogie woogie, the second CD, *Raino Bolognese*, focuses on his more exploratory and 'out' playing. Here, Snow moves through a number of ideas in a single improvisation, and while he demonstrates a little and fluid imagination, this set is less joyous, more austere.

The final disc pushes the boat out even further in a series of collaborations with fellow pianist Jocelyn Robert, using MAX software in conjunction with a Dekadisk. The Dekadisk is like a modern version of the player piano. Rather than mimicking the bewildering complexity of Corán Nancarrow's *Studies for Player Piano*, Robert's interventions are fairly prosaic. "Section Rhythmicus" is one of the most successful pieces here and also the closest to Nancarrow, thickening to the point where actually all the piano keys are in use at the same time. "Headline" by contrast, is a 20 minute layering and transposition of a single phrase, which quickly wears heavy on the attention span. John Oswald makes the most technically ambitious piece, "The End of the Extending In Computer post-proliferated the diatonic of the saturated degrees of Snow's note clusters, magnifying their innate harmonic detail and thereby introducing stiffness and space into the otherwise insistent monologue... a badly needed change of pace."

PHIL. ENGLAND

Speedy I

A Shocking Hobby
MOVIEHUT MOVIE74.COM

Boettner, that burned-out crater of docklands and factory sites on the coast of northern Holland, has always angred a brutal reputation. Another of the great 'downsized' manufacturing centres of the late 20th century along with Sheffield, Liverpool, Detroit and Chicago, it has created hard music for hard times. Gabba, a wild, speed-razed mix of savage beats and sampled industrial wastes, had its origins here in the mid-90s.

With his latest release, *Jochem Raps*, otherwise known as *Speedy 1*, creates an equally bludgeoning, delectable mix, but from a very different set of dynamics. *Shooting Hobby* is an uncompromising take on post-Industrial Techno celebrating the combined effects of corrosion and distortion upon the rhythms of modern urban existence. Raps isolated Techno's components, stripped and scoured them to reveal the raw, metallic essence within. After a reverbiering exploration of some terrain reminiscent of early 70s Krautrock on the opening track, 'Terra Zaps', he lays into the listener with the hammering percussion and deep bass pulses of 'Borax', a chilling, blood-maddened

invention of Hollop's rhythmic vocabulary "Drill" clanks and throbs with relentless insistence, continually reassembling itself out of pensive, yet abrasive fragments: "Vopak", "Actor Nine" and "Amoco Cador" follow similar lines of assault: their aggressive minimalism sending noise levels into the red, even as they emerge from quieter constructions such as "Sabina Seat" and "Cakigula".

Made up of rough surfaces and sheets of tarnished rose, if *Shocking Hobby* does not give up its sacrescious easily. There's a harsh discipline at work here, and a personal track record that reaches back through Warp to the days of Ritchie Hower's Plus B label. The dense, shifting masses constantly reveal new features and details, but to unexpected peaks or cut away to expose lower more shadowy strata. The effect is completed with "Hartnasser," which begins with a barely audible high-pitched whine, before introducing a repeated, descending phrase for piano over which harsh layers of noise ripple and swirl. Like the indecent shimmer of oil on stagnant water: both fascinate and unsettle. Stark, rigorous and challenging, this could well be the Future Sound of Rotterdam.

KEN HOLLINGS

Karlheinz Stockhausen

Helikopter-Streichquartett
AUVIO MONTAGNE NOTEBOOK CO

In 1991, Stockhausen received a commission for a string quartet from the Salzburger Festspiele. And then, as so often, he had a dream: "I heard and saw four string players in four helicopters flying in the air and playing." In the dream, people were standing in a vast public plaza where four towers of television screens and loudspeakers had been set up, each one showing one of the players in close up, playing tremolos in such a way that their music blended with the sound of the helicopter blades.

The organisers set in motion a series of negotiations with the Austrian army for obtaining the helicopters and permits, but the project fell through and it wasn't until the 1995 Holland Festival that the work was premiered in three flights. It went pretty much according to the dream: four players (The Arditi Quartet), four pilots, four co-pilots circling above the venue, and four banks of monitors mixed up to the instruments, the voices of the performers, and a separate pickup for the rotor blades themselves.

Since the 70s, Stockhausen has been concerned to write what he terms 'post-apocalyptic' music – music that comes after the catastrophe. Hence the weaving together of shamanic visions, new technology and themes of elementary vibrations and colour schemes into grand cosmological operas in which sound, vision, space and time are re-mythologised as a dynamic Gesamtkunstwerk. It's ironic, however, that the more technologised and futuristic his work has become, the more weighed down it

is by the tyrannical fantasies of the past. Like a latterday Wagner, his dreams are all of primal potencies and world-creating gods and goddesses, immersed in the same visions of 'absolutes' and 'transcendence' that served the 20th century so badly. Did no one remind Stockhausen of the psychotic dawn ride in *Apocalypse Now*, when helicopters napalm the jungle while broadcasting *The Ride Of The Valkyries*?

The recording of the premiere was released by Stockhausen's own label, however, this subsequent recording was made in 1996 to incorporate a new code thus the work as it stands here begins with "Ignition Of The Turbines, Entry Of The Instruments", followed by three different "Formula Cycles" and closing with the added "Descent." As the turbines shift up, a low blustering portamento becomes distinguishable as the louder rattle chipping of the helicopter blades. Against the familiar rising turbine whine of takeoff, the other plucks a low bass note while the two instruments move from drones to shorter and faster staccato riffs, rising in and out of their rhythm to reach the pace of the blades. To keep time, the players were synchronised using a click track on headphones. This shadowing of the helicopters' ascent occupies the first section, rising to a climax after which the gestures of the instruments break up into tremolo and crossfading glissando.

The wotrs and wote play in a high, thin register, curling and feathering around while the performers call out Stockhausen's favourite sequence of numbers from one to seven in harsh, guttural voices — like Wigner scoring *Severus Sever*. It's here that the work finds its mythical core: the magical incantation of the numbers, calling out the deep structure of the music. The numbers are also the names of the four primal wotrs around each player, whose notes dance like fireflies. The sound is full of attack, with the instruments occasionally clattering for a distressed chord in a late Romantic idiom, before shearing away into wye harmonies and pitch changes in quarter notes. The helicopters provide a constant rumbling ground against the acute angles of the instruments. A second counting, from one to 13,3, pausing briefly before a 14: again in unison, makes a new climax as the group then begins to move. The wotrs begin to shuffle the pack downwards for the "Abstieg," seeping into lower densities while glancing off into high register harmonies, until the close finally lands.

MATT PFYCHKE

Cecil Taylor

Melancholy
PSP 104 CO.

On 30 September 1990, pianist Cecil Taylor led a unit of eight European horn players in a performance at the Bechstein Concert Hall. Until now the recording has lain in the RHP vaults, though you imagine it writhing and howling and keeping the label owners awake.

soundcheck

at night. 70 minutes of sonic wordment screaming "Releive me!" Annistori Ulrich Stock met the pastor in Berlin last year. He was rising breakfast at his B&B, and complaining about President Clinton, the US bombing of Yugoslavia and the run-release of Melchior. Play the disc and Taylor's plants start to add up.

He begins with a tiny motif, a click delivered with the sharp-angled flatness that has won him renown as the supreme wit-crack on his instrument. The horn players wear in the whole restlessness which divides this cell and a whole state-unlike. The word ventures with its echoes of Lust, Paganini and Van Halen suggests athletics, technicians, popping through exercises in which the measure is fixed. In contrast, Taylor adopts the "straight to the body" punch of abstract art: this is collective noise collage where composition is determined by weighing the timbral actuality of each element.

Taylor unleashes a cacophonous nightmare: an insipid assault on your Kambai categories. These sports work on you as physical sensation flows to the solar plexus. The taste and logic of the contrabass are exquisite, mindbogglingly beautiful. Taylor's deployment of acoustic forces is so free of tonal restraint it enters the orbit of such types of overheard electric noise as Stratos Javorczyk's Accordion music carved out of emotive noise with jagged barbarism.

In this hearing environment, no individual can play a solo (though one recognizes some feverishly responsive ripples emanating from Evan Parker's soprano). When the muffled form draw back, you appreciate the work bassist Barry Guy and drummer Tony Doby are doing to lift the storm and stress out of Romantic gloom. As pioneers of free improvisation, Guy and Doby understand playing as a matter of vigilant interest. This 360-degree awareness of the potential of each sound nudges into Taylor's concept of each piano note as a percussive beat. Their punching, clustered, exhilarating in-work achieves an extraordinary feat: they form the music in permanent crisis.

Melchior is an epic event: 60s free jazz refined, clarified and made more vicious by all the work these European free improvisers have done on extended instrumental technique in the intervening decades. More vicious because the globe is more vicious. Like the late William Burroughs, Taylor stares straight down the muzzle of the American hegemon, showing that unclouded realism is the only guarantee of art that works.

BRN WATSON

Ultra-red

Structural Adjustments

MEL ALTAIR/MPIRE (C)

Like fellow West Coasters Terre Tharmitz, Ultra-red self against the grain of Received Ambient. Against the holy universalism of its unrelenting tendency, where all grinds

discourse is muted or presumed missing. Rather than remain cocooned within this long, lily-lyle lental droll (a lout's chattering), a conveniently meaning-free recourse to easy Sublime: they want Ambient to hold and to break up the soundscape of everyday life. Microphonics as ball politics, and the noise taken as public space. If U-I sound does — an anti-glucose Ultra-throat — nothing could be further from the truth. And if further from the truth is as where they see Ambient going, they favour a material and sensual transformation (rather than the quick fix of dodgily co-opted shamanism). Not to the bardo, not lost in the dunes.

They come out of a specifically Californian overlap of autonomous zones — the alternative Queer scene, Industrial music, LA's art scene — originally defining their project with a simple mission statement: "Sound/body/labour". Structural Adjustments is a documentary work, but it's also an ingrained discourse on (and) using (ones) they don't merely appeal politics onto a ready-made loop (or vice versa). This music is a joy to listen to even as it imports break and despairing notes, how the communities of Pico Alto and Alois Village — the Union de Vecinos — fought against the dismantling strategies of the LA Housing Authority, when what was supposed to be community building was in fact a covert shredding of power bases in the name of various Capital (embracing) abstractions. Postmodern commentary would have us believe in a pluralistic "land of politics," but the Real has not disappeared overnight in urban ghettos. Third World barriers, war-torn countries. And the persistence of the Real calls for persistence of vision: the opportunity for a thousand new politics.

The "Politics of Structural Adjustments" interview like Realize: U-I don't reproduce the timeless radio deche of politics as a grim-faced supplement to (or) music: isolation or a deathless, merry choral. It is rather a tension of such preconceptions, indeed, at times this is exactly what Structural Adjustments sounds like: things being bawled stretched, frayed. The ordinary is twisted into springer new folds, serrated lines of testimony sounds of protest, song, disappointment, joy — imagine urbanism meets concrete prays downward.

If you already think you hear a familiar sound — a melancholy frazzled and forlorn Left-leaning music, spun along predictable lines, bruised radicalism as self-aggrandisement on w/e is/was — then think again. Ultra-red emerge out the other side with a sound of affirmation: "Nausea" for instance is just beautiful, as is the suddenly choral "Cancion De La Pasada". Structural Adjustments opens with the sound of construction (a sonic pun)? The expected sound of industrial/urban/Leftist drilling their message home? And goes on to present a literal and figurative deconstruction

in process. U-I also take their place in a history of microphonics, opening up a potential new history of the CD itself — investigating its singular SPACE, where two may be content just to deploy the CD as a longer version of the LP or tape linearity in place, untouched, unquestioned no structural adjustments.

In pressing something loudly uncanny rather than us/it and worthy, Ultra-red opens up a space for further work, rather than tying a lake-melting lullaby, they leave us with a sense of things only just being scratched. Demida has always insisted deconstruction proper was an affirmative practice — the affirmative (Ultra-red) take this at its word — bending our ears to tomorrow knows what.

JAN PENTON

Various Artists

Chicago 2018 It's a Gonna

Change

CLARISFOI (C) 2018 EMI 171 2013

"The real sounds of the advanced Chicago sound," it says on the cover. German journalist Wolf Kempmann is the hunter and contemporary Chicago is the game in this zeitgeist-capturing exercise. As he describes it in his sleeveless, Kampmann visited the city last summer, armed solely with Jim O'Rourke's address and the desire to make the completion. Armed with O'Rourke's bulging address book, Kampmann found himself networking all over a big city that soon began to appear like a very small town. The fulcrum around which all else turns in this snapshot at least a Tortoise. Several contributors here have links to Chicago: favorite sons (for 2000, scope 217 Tractor, Rudy K Brown and by extension, Pullman). So, a single mood prevails: it's one of dislocation, knowing where you're from, Country, dis, minimalism. Brazilian sounds all make an appearance. In fact, apart from the hectic contributors bearing the mark of Ken Vandermark and Piers Williams, Chicago's radical jazz past (early Sun Ra and AACM are mentioned in the sleeveless) is largely in the background. The foreground is, well, kinda mellow. The sleeveless also make much of the claim: Midwestern peace of life, compared to the hype and energy of New York or LA. Whatever the spin, it feels like a coherent interpretation of a place and a time.

The compilation holds water, with the dominant thrust invidious the ways rock can absorb other genres, transmuting it into something else altogether. Torosé contribute Jetty 99, a radical time of a track from JNY. Jerry K Brown's piece combines Noto-like clicking with glitch-heavy piano atmospheres. Tractor places Jeff Parker's guitar alongside aboutous Asian American jazz presence. Tatsa, Aoki's sowing besties. The Eternals provide a piece of baroque dub surrealism that leans towards Cam Against the Bobby Conn's sugarplum singer-songwriter camp.

— love it or hate it — is an exceedingly bad taste, regardless of Jim O'Rourke's support. WILL MONTGOMERY

Various Artists

Romano Alla Rotonda

ALBA MARCONI/PLATA VAI 11/10/11 CD

This really was the avant garde in 1959 — a concert of Cage, Feldman and their newfound European acolytes at the Rotonda dei Pivelliani in Milan. The historic recording of the event now appears remastered, though, lo-hi, on that excellent treasure trove of experimental music, the Alba Marconia label. It comes with a long, informative and adequately translated essay by Gabriele Bonomo, setting the music in context and describing the almost uniformly dismissive contemporary reaction. "Noises [humor] at the Rotonda," wrote an unfattering reviewer in the Italian press.

The concert was the first to mark the coming together of Cage and New York composers with European composers. Juan Hidalgo, Walter Marchetti and Leopoldo La Rosa — a Peruvian composer then resident in Italy — used indistinctness for the first time in the pieces composed for this concert. There had been friendly links with Italian modernists Luciano Berio and Bruno Maderna who were involved in the first Italian performances of Cage's music in 1954 — Cage finished the tape of Fontana Re at the Rai sound studio on their invitation in 1958. Maderna also promoted the music of Marchetti and Hidalgo. However, there was a growing ideological split between Cage and other European modernists such as Boulez, who rejected anything other than a very limited use of chance techniques.

All the compositions date from 1954-59 and despite the album title, most of them are undated in approach. That's to be expected of Morton Feldman, whose two short *Piano Pieces* are featured. But even the anarchic Walter Marchetti is capable of introspection here — his *Gematria* a music of quiet aggression. The piece is for clarinet, oboe, vibraphone and cello, but performed in a version without clarinet. "owing to a sudden deflection of an exceedingly fearful performer." Doppo for bass clarinet and two baritone saxophones is contrastingly abrasive. Hidalgo's *Offences Trio* for flute, co. angles and bassoon is buxian, while La Rosa's *Musica Per Piano And Three Timpani* juxtaposes sudden violence with long periods of silence. Cage's Duo consists of the parts for flute and viola excerpted from his *Concert For Piano And Orchestra*. Cage himself performs Feldman and has own *Musica Per Piano*, though he's not a renowned pianist.

The concert explored the crucial space of the 16th century Rotonda, with performers spread among the appreciative but restive

the compiler

New compilations: reviewed, rated, reviled

audience. January 1959 must have been a bad time for colds in Milan. They're especially nasty during the wide opening spaces of Cage's pieces — though of course he was interested in undermining the boundary between music and ambient sound.

At this point in his career, Cage was concerned to develop greater performer freedom with "chance modernism" responses ("chance determined" Haislop and Pancheri increasingly turned to a kind of theatrical, subversive "action music" with the founding of the ZAU group in 1964). La Rosa returned to Peru and his later career isn't recorded here. But their encounter in Milan resulted in an intriguing historic document from a turning point in the avant-garde.

AMY HAMILTON

Various Artists

Songz Comp
SONG 11 CD

The latest compilation from Cologne: label Songz offers a wonderful array of dysfunctional muzak and ambience that manages to avoid seeming laboured or reductive. "Microstems," Scratch Pet Lenz and Du all offer bustling sonologies, while Lithops (Lian Si Werner) is now doing what Mouse On Mars used to be so great at, making sparsely limited up music that could go in any direction at any given moment. C-Schütz & Hapich's brilliant "Competition Track" could be the soundtrack to the traffic jam scene in *Jane Gans Le Metro*: chaotic frequencies jammed over a background cacophony of car horns.

Deconstructing seminal moments in pop history has become one of the constants in electronics, and there are some great examples here. Only Mouse On Mars mess the mark with "5c," yet another passtime of B05 synth pop. However, the tracks by FX Reinhold, Vert and Wang Inc. all make up for this. FX Reinhold's excellent "Metix v 1067" deploys sounds familiar from the decade of convergent glitches so common to recent electronics to investigate the heavily structured dissonant form of the canon. "Metix" sounds as if Bo Diddley has been played to a voice-recognition program which, having isolated the iconic phrase, is desperately trying to piece them back together.

Vert's "Symmetry Breaking" opens with a Sade-like solo piano over the background squeak of a perpetual motion machine. When the rhythm section comes in it is made up of antique mechanized novelties and cures "2 On 4 I Love Song" by Wang Inc. is built around a music box which nostalgically picks up on old time tune. There is an analogy to be made between the clockwork toy and the computer. Both can be programmed to play back the same song over and over, but these artists are holding out for when the program corrupts and accidents happen.

BEK BORTWITZ

It's got a long way to go before it catches up with Adonis, but the exceedingly hip **Teenage Shutdown** series of themed 60s garage punk comps has now reached volumes 12-15. The best of the latest bunch of groovy tracks through the arcs of middle America (although there are a couple of strapping groovers from Hawaii) is **"Tm Gonna Stay" Target: fuzz!** (Teenage Shutdown TS6613 CD&P), which compiles 17 tracks of oblique fuzzbox bachelors by overly horny, misadvised, poem-kanted teens from the mid-60s with names like Mongrel's Band, Grans Of Time, Howes, Peckaby Hermitage and (possibly the worst group name ever) Wanderer's Rest. There is nothing more glorious than a barely competent musician let loose on an overdriven amp, and there's plenty of feedback snarl from Oscar Hamod & The Majesties, Lou Capin and Rock Garden. Of particular note is "The Modes" "Leave My House" which sounds like a 45 found on the high street, trampled underfoot during the pre-Christmas rush. **Mu Tsuane...**

Primi-Tee Pioneers (TS6612 CD&P) is even better. As such proponents of the enthusiasm-over-skill school as Lester Bangs, The Howl and Richard Hell, these three tried to tell anyone who listen, attitude is everything and here's the proof. The groups collected on **Howlin' For My Givin'** (TS6614 CD&P) are far more talented, but prove to be just as excessive on the fuzz and disgracefully recorded drums on these 18 headbanger stomps through maximum R&B. **She's A Pest** (TS6615 CD&P), meanwhile, is less individual than the other volumes, but has enough sleazy punk and fantastic photos to make it a useful workhorse.

Ernst Audio: The Forgotten Sounds Of Tomorrow (Ernst Audio EZ11 CD), you may collect psychedelic disasters, but it does sound like it's caught in a time machine's hyperspace with too foot in Alexander Ryback's swinging bachelor pad and the other in Autelich's 1993 parody. Detroit's most excellent Enzatz Audio label has been at the forefront of the contemporary electro movement since its inception in 1995 and this comp collects some of the label's finest pastiches of B05 synth pop. Both po-faced and tongue-in-cheek, these tracks by such workshops at the temple of Vince Clarke as Adult, Le Cor, Perspectives, Artificial Material, Fastgraph and Bobbleid use the alienation quotient inherent in a music whose spiritual leaders called themselves "Showroom Dummies" while still

maintaining a commitment to groove. Sounding less like one of the Stepford Wives, aerobic tapes and more like rap session therapy. **Voices In My Lunchbox** (Play Research PR19 CD)

documents electronics' capacity to create haunting music that has a repressed memory. Filled with wurlis, childlike vocals and sparse, unsettling synths, vocals punctuated with schoolyard melodies, **Voices In My Lunchbox** suggests that there are ghosts in all those machines and proves that electronic music doesn't have to be the sole province of eggheads and guys who like to make farting sounds with their keyboards. Of particular note are Phoenix's "Pousins" which has nothing to do with its title unless it's a nightmare about vagina dentate. Jesse Pierson & Tenants Band's chiding "You're Right, There's Nothing Left", Kit Clayton's morose "Casting Nets" and Herbert's stunning House deconstruction, "Back To The Start".

Relying on African (mostly Polari) music for its emotional content, **Friviva Collection 1** (Friviva FR100B CD) is nevertheless an equally powerful testament of electronic music's mutability and capacity for Homotopia-buffered soundscapes. On the Chan Chan remix of Lobi Traore's "Korodugu", Larry Heard-style Deep House synth washes sound like talking drums, there's a nifty dub reworking of Djigars' "Ladikari" which feels like the back-to-Africa impulses of Rastafarianism coming to fruition, IG Culture's remix of Nahwa Doumba's "Faton", meanwhile, simply struts its stuff like a peacock in mating season with drums that sound like Tony Allen grew an extra limb.

Just as musically rhythmic — though, of course, less noisy as funk — is **In Ru: Our Sweet Way: A Tribute To Dave Brubeck** (Arista AVA0005 CD). Despite his predilection for classical forms and quirky time signatures, Brubeck increasingly appears a substantial jazz influence. The album covers all his hits with the inexplicable exception of the biggest, "Take Five". Although Zorn himself doesn't appear, he's cavilled 14 of his melodies, solo or with their ensembles. Cellist Erik Friedlander ("Winter Ballad"), pianist Anthony Coleman ("The Duke") and Bill Frisell ("Summer Song") play solo, — Brubeck's most enduring standard, "In Your Own Sweet Way", is covered in ornamental mode by Chris Speed's Pachora Quintet and of a very different sort can be found on **Escalator Records, Tokyo** (Bungstod 075 CD), which brings together

a selection of recent releases from exotic Triptoppers, Cubismo Grifico, peppy disco brats Yukari Fresh and lo-fi, cosmic soft rockers Neil & Inez. Outstanding moments include the pumped-up plastic soul groovings of Montanese's "The Wiggly Cat Walk" and the canonic dance-floor exuberance behind Loskikh's "What's New Pasquaz?" However, it's "Flag Alphorns" by The High Yarns (who think of these names?) that really arms for the feet by simply blending muted shivers of sampled flutes with the kind of utopian percussive waves found on old Go-go records from the early 80s.

Acknowledging the influence of B05, synth pop groups like Depêche Mode, Human League, Soft Cell and even Yotoko, Ontario-based Suckco's output defiantly rejects the increasingly hip, hyper-complexity route to rhythm engineering. As their **Assorted Pieces** (Suckco D07 10") label sampler demonstrates, their approach is based upon simple one-finger melodies and DMM beats, clever, interlocking sequences and "classic" hooks. The four artists here offer a good introduction to the label's sound. Plus it's the mark with a cold, nasy track of DMM patterns over a network of static, squeaky scratching and eerie pads, before nipping mercury melodies leave the listener reeling water. Timotee Teaster's "1982 For You" constructs a cold, dense weave of slipping textures and details, while Brinche Krastel turn in a plain cheery, nuzzling pop melody seemingly coiled in snappy analogue whorls.

Avoiding the beat almost entirely in favour of a fascination for flux and fluid, atmospheric movement, **Summer: New Electronic Music From Chicago** (Boreda B0XCD001 2 CD) introduces a quality coterie of Chicago-based operators from the pudging nose-blends of Anti-Dynamical Reality to the scratchy, microscope everts of Engr Long and Suckco's savoring torched ones. Elsewhere, Kour's "Barned Ground" is anything but — a deep, shifting, shimmering meeting together of sounds and textures.

Similarly mind-blowing is **Offbeat: Bar Intersection** (Carte Consult No Number CD) which compiles 20 tracks from past performers at the now defunct Kart bar in Copenhagen — a seven month project dedicated to experimental electronic soundvision in an old oil factory located by the harbour side. As well as live treats from Paul, Scott and Chicks On Speed, there's strong material from native artists Goodapple (a remix of a Montalese remix), Voks (a Goodapple (aka?) Mounten (paranoid Ambient swells), Tords Berstrand (dark bursts of cold noise) and Kran. Well worth investigating. [J] Reviewed by Amy Hamilton, Ken Hollins, David Howell and David Shapiro

soundcheck

Various Artists

The Improvisation Meeting At Bar Aoyama
RESER 002 CD

Repeat

Temporary Contemporary
RESER 004 CD (52 CD)

Toshimaru Nakamura & Sachiko M

Oh
HPTM 014 CD

The Bar Aoyama is a tiny laboratory for fugitive onkyo alchemy in Tokyo. The sleeveless boothfully admit that a compilation release only ten months after the bar opened is perhaps foolhardy, but the quality of the players justifies this prospect: add to the gigantic heap of new music produced. Here are performers among them: guitarists and club organizers Taku Sugimoto and Tetsu Aoyama who have agreed on a common aesthetic that is rigorous, antiscapular, concerned with structure and timing grooves chosen for their narrowness. If their sketchiness is sometimes baffling and even insubstantial, the tentative nature of their probes and their true willingness to be exploratory is nevertheless entirely convincing. Analogous to parts of London's thriving electronic improvisation scene, it is ergonomic in perspective and distinguished by a merciful lack of notes.

This music provides an antidote to the descent into a world of overblown and flybitten legends, those who demand a place in the country to go with their place in history. This is markedly selective, focused music which lays down the gauntlet with calm assurance and a serenity achieved through concentration and confidence. It's happy with a certain degree of anonymity, players turn up their instruments, already and without the vaudeville and pompous impulses that sometimes spoil Western Improv showmanship. Here the performers ignore around one another; the occasional blunder is taken in good humor. The eclectic is held in check by a shared philosophy that values quietude and slowness, even if it also loves

the occasional deferring "to let it be" emphasis on the ear, new music, reflecting the primacy of the whole, always being a diffusing urban noise and I found it altogether intriguing.

The third organizer of the Meeting is Toshimaru Nakamura, formerly a guitarist, but who abandoned the instrument for the too well, because it seemed to put too much of himself into his music. It says a lot of something unpredictable and difficult to control. The new players living disk which he uses as a source of feedback. Changing horses in this way has allowed him to dismantle notions of performance and the barrier between the stage and audience by requiring that, above all, he listen as much as play. Temporary Contemporary finds him in Reser, a duo with percussionist Jason Kahn whose mallets kick robustly fashions out Nakamura's ghostly sheers of sound. Repeat is assured, limpid, convincing and gently for out. Oh pitches Nakamura against Sachiko M whose soulless sampler with no memory matches his mering disk without inputs in a series of exercises in which apparent improvisation is investigated with intellectual exactitude. Their armful shells not only focus the players' minds but demand the creation of a new, radical method of music making. It's cool, extreme, tentative and doesn't yet sound like the incarnation of the philosophical conundrum the marriage of instruments suggests. But it's clearly only a matter of time.

SD BAXTER

The Wild Mans Band

Three Rockers And A Pitter
LADY BOWLING 14 CD

This occasional group, established in years ago and composed of Peter Gifford, Peter Die Jorgensen and Peter Van Nieuwen, is a Three Rockers And A Pitter. Swindlers and Gifford is also a member of Brotmann's Chicago tent. Lends his considerable lungs. Needless to say, the attraction of the venture lies in hearing his take on good funk and improvisation redefined as Brotmann and Gustafsson alongside one

another. And, he does the capacity to blow himself away with bursts of striking momentum, each can vary the register with greater playing. Judging by this disc, the pair have clearly developed a fine mutual understanding "The Four-Stroke Engine" for example has some wonderful dry melodic moments alongside surging high temperature dueling. Each displays the fruits of their long-term research into the fringes of their instruments: voice. And Brotmann's use of tangents and clonnet as well as synthesizers makes for a broad palette. While things are quite interesting however, it's down in the engine room (despite their avant-cadentials, the group adheres to this traditional hierarchy). Jorgensen is an agile free jazz drummer but Nielsen's rather narrow range of sounds on electric bass hems the music in. Between them they don't let the music into the kind of rolling, rolling way excitement that might have elevated the set into the realm of the unpredictable. The air is always drawn inward to the highly solo contributions of Brotmann and Gustafsson. These peak intelligence and guts aplenty but pack a charge perhaps best experienced live. Great blowing but few surprises.

WILL MONTGOMERY

Jah Wobble & Deep Space

Beach Patrol 19 CD

Jah Wobble & The Invaders Of The Heart

Mojam Dub

SOUL 19 CD

If Wobble's current release rate is anything to go by, he is a coming to become a Cockney (double) of fellow bass player and World Music guy Bill Lavelle. Still, sharing off the (very) eclectic mix that characterised so many of his releases prior to last year's return to form with Deep Space, Wobble has so far managed to avoid Lavelle's globalization errands. *Beach Patrol* (former Soul) Wobble's second outing with Deep Space shows what of heights focusing on the basses can still reap. Out go the multi-ethnic, revolving door

guest appearances, in come the virtues of a small group, empathically bonded together by a year of touring. Even in an age of cyberspace link-ups and virtual collaboration it was clear that nothing can beat sharing a Transit van in installing the mystical energies that Wobble so craves. Jah Liebert's rhythm mathematics may have been replaced by the more pedestrian algebra of Mark Sanders, but otherwise the method remains the same—Wobble's manically simple basslines drive forward with a simple repetition while Che Bel and Jon-Denise Balle add non-gratuitous hints of medieval peasant knavery with an array of ethnic and ancient woodwind. Paul Schutte adds "atmosphere" on a couple of tracks. Chris Coocoon some strong out guitar elsewhere and the mering disk of Mark Angelo Lusardi precision-welds it all together.

However, the results, so often pleasurable as they are, pale next to the inspired collaboration with the Pans-laved Lactian group Molam Lao, showcased on the *Mojam Dub* disc. The quartet specialises in modern, an ancient modal-poetic environment where male and female singers improvise lyrics to the pulsating blown and sucked rhythms of the khene mouth organ and more recently keyboards, guitars and drums. Molam Lao are of a more traditional stripe, and to the omnipresent charm of the khene they add kachap guitar and a variety of chime percussion. Wobble and his Deep Space bandmates bring in the low end (reggae drum loops and subterranean bass) and some tasteful accompaniment. For once this is a fourth World collaboration which actually matches live with live. Instead of a rigorous chart strictly laid against the crassness of secular drum machines, the rhythm base and party vibe of the Lactian music dovetail perfectly with the reggae setting. Connections on both sides are found—the tossing quality of the gajous Lactian vocals, the melodic-like tone of the khene, the unrestrained scales of Balle's bagpipes and Balle's shoddy funk. It's an exhilarating mix, and one that proves that cross-cultural meanings of music needn't be labelled with mystical baggage. The will to party is often all that is necessary.

ALAN CUMMINGS



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\$39⁰⁰ 4 lp set



\$14⁰⁰/cd



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the boomerang

New rereleases rated on the rebound

The most recent titles to reappear from Ohio's Badu-rock collective **Pere Ubu** are of markedly disparate character, especially since they are adjacent entries in the Ubu discography. The group continued the agenda begun on their second, *Dub Housing*, with 1980's *The Art Of Walking* (Cooking Vinyl COCKCD 157 CD). The self-produced collection is an altogether more scattered affair, with chaos threatening at every turn; its greater purpose may be nearly incomprehensible to outsiders, but wasn't that part of the charm of being named after an Allard Jay character? Singer David Thomas (aka Groucho Behemoth) seems to enjoy the collaging arrangements of "Stupidity in Bed" and "Young Piles in The Basement." In its totality, the album gives off the strong, only-whiff-of-a-long-night in the Ubu practice space. The additions to *The Art Of Walking* offered by this reissue supposedly restores the collection to the original conception, though the new material will possibly only resonate with Pere Ubu fanatics.

The difference that a competent producer (Rough Trades Adam Karon) and drummer (Arson Fier) at the time helped from The Feebles, prior to forming The Golden Pigeonhole, could make to the group's sound can be heard throughout the whole of 1982's *SONG OF THE BATING MAN* (Cooking Vinyl COCKCD 158 CD). The songs are swathed in layers of never-to-sugarcoat and Fier's backbeats ensure that every song here moves slower at bpm faster than anything else in the Ubu catalogue. Bridging both albums is the charmed fury of Adam Rosenzweig's synth, a fearful squall spiraling out of control. David Thomas hollers and yodels in good form throughout the set, with a faster tempo seemingly roning in his insular tendency toward free-associative and/or outright distracted vocals. This was easily Ubu's most accessible material since their debut, *The Modern Dance*, released during the glory days of punk.

The received opinion these days is that punk's first blush was over almost as soon as its first sounds became a matter of record.

Whatever, for a few months starting at the end of 1976, **The Buzzcocks** led in those days by Baukilianian combed Howard Devoto, espoused a regulatory spirit that arguably superseded that of The Beatles.

It's a little weird to get *Sail Of Scorn* (Mute/Grey Area SCRATCH1 CD), The Buzzcocks' long unavailing but-for-a-four-track EP released in 1977, on CD in all its deadened, scratchy glory, but an urgency fanned by Devoto's literate sneer and Pettie Shelley's revved-up guitar riffs through No-dul moment here: nor indeed on Time's Up (Mute/Grey Area SCRATCH2 CD), another CD copy of a much bootlegged album of songs from the Scratch sessions. Its 11 tracks cover pretty much the same ground as *Scotch*, while various other songs making their first appearances—including "Love Battery" and "Beethoven's 'Lullaby You, Big Daddy'"—were to become integral parts of both post-Devoto Buzzcocks as well as his subsequent group Magazine. *Time's Up* comes complete with 28 pages of sleeve notes and contained on the enhanced CD, a film of "Breakdown" shot at their debut gig in Manchester. Nostalgia for come.

The Come Out Story (Hologram: No Number CD) on the other hand, will be nostalgic only for hardcore rabid fans of CBGBs circa 1978. Recording only one single and some demos, *Come Out* were a New York punk new wave outfit very much in the mould of Talking Heads and Pere Ubu. Vocalist James Kaufman utters deadpan geek haikus like "Tuesday on the black-house

in a mess Start and always Feeble Jampholus A glass to air" and "Hauswieser play tennis They drive station wagons" while the group work up a nerdy sweat with angular choked guitars and difficult rhythms. On paper they may sound a bit like The Right Be Gone, long lost older brother, but their horn-rimmed quirkiness sounds less mannered and more cutting than that of their distant relations.

Come Out may have inhibited their own bemused world, but they never left this one totally behind. **Helt-Burana** however, lost on some stratosphere that's only ever been visited by The Boredoms. Who else could scream "So them off" 20 times in 26 seconds without it meaning a damn thing? *Curtains Come In Flocks* (A-Z Records AZ0002 CD) was originally released as a cassette in 1994 on Chocolate Plank, and documents a very early Helt-Burana performance in a small room at a Tokyo university in 1992, plus some four-track recordings done in 1994. Whether live or in the studio, the same approach applies to all the material collected here: malodorous blasts of deconstructed hardcore drums, guitar and vocals that follow a time signature only the basic code Steve Austin and James Summers could follow.

First issued in 1973, **Morma Winston** Edge Of Time (Disconforme DISC 1962 CD) is, as the singer accurately says, "a little piece of the history of English jazz with all the vitality of the time." It boasts solos of the calibre of trombonist Paul Rutherford and Mulcom Griffiths, trumpeter Kenny Wheeler and saxophonist Alan Sidirome.

Its ensemble players include Art Themen on tenor, Mike Osborne on alto, pianist John Taylor, drummer Tony Levin and guitarist Gary Boyle. Five years later Winston and Taylor would attain the cool finesse of their group Azimuth, but this was the fervid time of ambitious big bands led by Neil Ardley, Mike Westbrook, Mike Gibbs and John Warren, of Ian Carr's Nucleus, Soft Machine with horns, Keith Tippett's Cenotaph and The Spontaneous Music Orchestra. Edge Of Time touches at times on all those points of reference in terms of its energy and openness, while occupying its own particular place amongst them.

Definitely occupying his own place in the history of Euro-American jazz was violent **Don Sugarcane Harris**. Harris was one half of the great, underappreciated rock 'n' roll duo Don & Dewey before making a name for himself on albums by John Lee Hooker, John Mayall and Frank Zappa. Before you get bad-hipped back of Papa John Creach with Jefferson Airplane, however, Harris's six albums for the German BASF-IMP's label compiled on *Anthology Volume One (Past & Present PAFR002 CD)* featured tracks that pushed jazz well far beyond the realm staked out by someone like Stéphane Grappelli. Encompassing both the groovy ("Keep On Driving") and the impressionistic ("Blues On The Moon"), Harris managed to swing as hard and colour his notes as effectively as any Texas tenor. Reviewed by Julian Cowley, Louise Gray, Richard Henderson, Peter Shapiro and Dave Tompkins.

The Buzzcocks



in brief avant rockReviewed by **Edwin Pouncey**

Backworld Anthem From The Phoenix Park was written rock. Formed in 1993 and inspired by English folk music, 60s psychedelia and Symbolist art, Backworld is their focus on the still lingering shadow of the past around which they have their 'tamed palette of paintings in sound'. Nebraska born 'fortman Joseph' Budekewitz is a repressive underground NY artist who came with the B0s New York Cinema of Transgression scene, plus a series of live collaborators and a resulting recording project with Lydia Lunch. The third Backworld CD (where Budekewitz works alongside vocalist/producer Laura Kraus) pushes even deeper into the group's imaginary magdalen symphonic forest of early discovery, with extra help from limping artists' former Swiss vocalist Jarboe and Blood Axis members Michael Phynnon and Annabel Lee. Anthem is a meticulously constructed creation which although marvellous to behold, tends to slide a little of indifference down the back of any listener with limited knowledge of early English minstrelsy, obscure 60s Prog or the writings of William Blake. It is only when Budekewitz allows his Mastrabian roots to show through, however, that the album's disparities and a taste is allowed to set in.

Eugene Chadbourne I Talked To Death In Stereo LOU LEBLANC As well as performing some original material this time round Chadbourne has decided to cover a few of his favourite things from other artists. These include George and Ira Gershwin, Rogers and Hart, Ruth Lowe (and yes, surprisingly) Albert Ayler. Recorded live in various US locations, these musical miniatures are not without a certain charm and grace. His Dan Hicks And His Hot Licks style treatment of the Rogers and Hart song 'Glad To Be Unhappy' is particularly fine - if only because he holds back from destroying his guitar and actually allows us, for once, to hear his fretboard dexterity.

Do Make Say Think *Goodbye Enemy Airstrip The Landlord Is Dead* CONSTITUTION 051010 CD
Recorded in a barn somewhere on the outskirts of Toronto, Canada (with chirping crickets etc.) Do Make Say Think's latest foray into experimental music sounds suspiciously quaint on the surface in a kind of *Honest-modern* Neil Young style. Punch down and howl, however, and out bubbles a boiling stew of molten rock, burping brass and spiky electronics, all of which effectively fuse to produce a most agreeable and

varied set of noises. The familiarity of the nod-out, slacker guitar sound — when set next to the unpredictable insected violence of the electronics — is indeed a thrilling, shocking thing.

David Fuzze: Flucyzzini

Jazzpatriot flucyzzini *Flucyzzini's* musicals on Screaming Headless Torsos guitar/flea/beat David Fuzze Flucyzzini are of those multi-talented musicians who have been blessed with the ability to play anything that enters their bulging forebrows. In this case Fuzze rattles out funny renditions from the songbooks of Pat Metheny, Jim Hendrix, Freddie Chopin, Ronald Shannon Johnson, George Russell, Chick Corea, Billy Strayhorn and Duke Ellington. John Philip Sousa and Jack Walcott without even pausing for breath! He also includes one of his own compositions for good measure but by the time it rolls round you could be forgiven for not paying too much attention. That Fuzze like Noyd Kennedy is undoubtedly a great musician cannot detract from the fact that he places too much emphasis on his selected hero(es) technique and not enough on the spirituality and human feeling that were into creating their music in the first place

Growlvr! You Must First Learn To Draw The Real MONSTERBOTS MONOBOTS

After completing various solo side projects, Michigan power trio Growlvr return with their most thunderous, free jazz rock statement to date. Powered by the Water Brothers' (Mike and Geoff) burning two-guitar engine and boosted by Eric Cook's flailing drum and screaming, *WFFLTD* is a rabid, high-energy rock 'n' roll animal statement on an elastic leash. Cranked up really high much of this could be mistaken for Maska Transonic in full Blue Cheer tribute mode, but there's more than little animal attached to Growlvr's guitar slash and crash. The restrained electric countdown to the Anisotropic inspired "Rocket To Dearborn" for example, displays their well-tuned collective ear for improvisation. The eventual deafening launch of the song is just as inventive, explosive, massively loud and beautifully chaotic in construction.

Hinds Brothers The Brilliant Sound! OMM SONIC 004 CD
The somewhat spooky looking Hinds Brothers' other job is publishing Sun Ra fanzine Saturn Research: an occasional

journal that delves into the teeming universe of the now departed cosmic bandleader. Although RA must be the major inspiration of *The Brilliant Sound*, his influence is sensibly kept at a respectable distance, thus allowing the Hinds enough room to do their own thing. Much of this is sensibly spaced Afrika Bambaataa/Jonson Crew (minus the vocoder)-style Techno slomp with a generous helping of Krautrock/Asian music ambience poured over it to taste. Despite looking horrible (just throw the cover away!) this is a more than pleasant surprise.

Molasses You'll Never Be Well
 NO MOOSE FAMILY FANCIPI ©©
 Once you get over the hump of mistaking the funeral all-black cover, inside and disc of this for some Keep Hano side project, the next barrier to scale is the sheer awfulness of Molasses' nasal cowpoke whine. Primarily recorded (on purpose) and reduced to minimal proportions, this break set of Nick Cave/Leonard Cohen-derived moanings with guitar, piano, harmonica and slight electronic accompaniment is a bitter musical call to swallow.

Paul Newman Machine Is Not Broken MPAA: PG-13
Another emotionally performed bout of (mostly) instrumental slow glide from Texas bass player Paul Newman and his small but disciplined bunch of energetic young musicians. Although songs like "Eight Day War" and "The Cup Is Fierce" sound primed to be slotted into the soundtrack of some future American independent arthouse movie, there is an invisible eternal glow to the material which soothes and warms you over to their side. Paul Newman may not be obviously outrageous or threatening (for that try Grant-Lee, but listen up — in their own way they rock just as hard).

The 1985 Obscured By Peak
Clubs *cover/cap/cr* 10

The 1985 hit from Pittsburgh (the same industrial patch that George Romero's *Living Dead* crawled out of) and this is their second fully formed album. Apart from that, little is known for this group whose publicity and prizes concentrate on honoring their "No Wave" sound. The album is a step in perfection. The 23 songs collected here reverberate with the combined influence of Wire and 1980 Sound! But there is also an element of Midwest art rock clanging bubbling under the surface which brings to mind such great lost abstract art rock groups as Tim Huxley and the pre-Pete Lora Combo Rock From The Tents. The attitude and skill exhibited here suggests that The 1985 have it in them to build on their reputation and make their own and parlay it in front of a hopefully suitably impressed audience when they hit Europe some time this year. Can't wait!

Peage Climbs The Holy

To fully appreciate this experiment I would advise you to video yourself with a video copy of Alejandro Jodorowsky's film *The Holy Mountain* to play alongside Peng's personalised homepage to the opening 31 dialogue-free minutes of this freaky, psychedelic, manicure masterpiece. Only then will you fully appreciate the full impact of Peng's performance here, recorded in July 1999 at the Bug Bar in Rochester New York during a screening of Jodorowsky's film. Without the flickering images, however, Peng's accompaniment drifts away from the heart of the film.

With the film, the music is a complex with obligatory skeletons and a couple that sounds as though all the air is being slowly pumped from the room as the dying performers gape for creative breath. The dead feeling of oblivion that washes over you while listening to Peng's emotions is, unfortunately, hard to shake off.

Sand Dunes Flares/Dunes Flare Is
DOWNEY STREET MUSIC 12"
Tim Wright's large outfit, Sand shouldn't be confused with the '70s Krautrock group of the same name, nor the title of electronic composer Ragnar Grospe's album for French label Shandar (which was inspired by the sand paintings of one Volkswagen [but now I'm just showing off]). This project, set in motion by the Tokyo-based studio head formerly of electronic project Germ, is another bag of noise completely, sounding more like a 21st-century Furusugi On the loose with an electronic tin can tied to its tail. Things really kick in, however, on the flip, "Dunes Flare Is Down" where the cacophonous composition spirals out of control, shot down by a lethal raspy trombone blast and a locked-groove death ray sample which demands, and gets, respect.

Some Other Dimensions In
Yo La Tengo *Excalibur*
2001/INNO 23000 **EC638** IS **45** **20**
These two self-released 45s, which see Yo La Tengo hook up with such Enimema banding stars as six players Sade, Mateen and Daniel Carter, trumpet player Roy Campbell Jr. and Run On percussionist Sae Gerner, are much more interesting than the mass appeal of YLT's normal stuff. In such a free-flowing company Yo La Tengo are coaxed out of their safe, cutesy indie-rock shell to show that they are not afraid to play rough sometimes. The glue that bonds this unlikely pairing together consists of freedom and the simple pleasure of making music together, a mixture which produces some excellent interplay between the group and their more hoarse jazz counterparts. Unforced and blissfully free of pretension, both 45s should be scooped up and treasured.

© 2004 Blackwell Publishing Ltd *Journal of Internal Medicine* 255: 479–486

in brief dub

Reviewed by **Steve Barker**

Hydroponics Let The Light Shine

Various Artists *New Breed Of*
Drop Volume 2 (cass/cd) 050017 m.

Rarely seen but often heard. Dougie

Wardrop surfaces again for the debut album from those horticultural specialists The Hydroponics. As founding member of Centry and label boss at Conspicuous Sounds.

Wardrop is currently in the vanguard of the UK's New Roots movement, and his activities have run across straight reggae tunes, dub for dub's sake, ska, breakbeat, jungle in its early form and the dooms of doom-laden sappers. The Hydroponics is home to some of the wilder excesses of Wardrop and his meliodica playing partner Chas. Crackling drum patterns and indeterminate sampled loops set the pace for this set, putting it at the far end of the dub spectrum before abstraction blurs the appeal. Perhaps not as outrageous as their previous 7", the Yabby You tribute "Beware", this could find new converts to the way of New Roots.

The second chapter of *New Breed Of Dub* serves as a sampler of past and future delights available from the only UK label to specialise in the genre. Inevitably, Wardrop pops up here again, but we also find other longtime heavyweights of the scene including The Truth, Mannesell, Iration Steppers and Twilight Circus. The boss heavy sound is typified by the latter's "Trinity", which opens the set. Deep vibrations in the bass may caused such a low end throb in my badly handired system that I felt I was being drawn into the pages of an Arthur Machen story.

Niney The Observer Truth & Rights Observer Style HEARTBEAT
H878 CD

A welcome release for this well compiled set from a producer whose work has been under-represented in the reggae revival market. Winston Holmes, digitally challenged following a workshop accident, was re-christened playfully, but pointedly, by his collaborator The Obeeser. His label was famed for chronicling contemporary events and showed a demonstrable concern for truth and rights, so much so that Ninoy became known as the Obeeser. The selections here follow on from his elemental "Blood And Fire" but from 1971, a tune that paved the way for the many suffers, songs, and social commentaries that found their way into record in the ensuing decade. Two versions of that rhythm feature here — one from Big Youth, "Fire Burn" and "Fire Origin" from The Obeeser All Stars. This serves as

an excellent introduction to Ninoy's work, but let the message go out: what we need now is the killer dub album which is just out there waiting to be rattled.

Seven Dub Rock It Tonight plus
Complete Restrikes LONG BEACH
6PM-7PM

There's a kind of slowed-down, loopy, lazy new club style that has always references to the past, but obviously belongs to now. This is the kind of music made by the French outfit *Seven Club*. It sounds easy, but it certainly is not when done right. Patrick Bieleby and Guillaume Menier are Paris-based muscians whose club influences tend to dominate those of funk, house and jazz. They have previously contributed to the impeccable *Guillemot compilation* *HR Dub Sessions Volume 1*. *Jubal* Nurruddin adds to the jazz flavors with his signature toasts, while the bonus remix CD tends to lean *Street* rather than *Rhythm & Soul* as a reference. May be too smooth for the grooved-out club fan.

Singers & Players Staggering

Various Artists Play **I'll Be Back**
Volume 3 On a sound-on-sound CD
 Stopping Hennessey is recognized as the On-U Sound label's finest reggae group. Hakey Dread and Congo Aiyem Raynor force us with Ben Sherman and Prince Fari at the Singers who, together with the Players, were attempting to break free from the over-reliance which plagued the career of so many promising Jamaican artists. The idea was to create an informal self-supporting collective for the purposes of recording and playing live, whereby a level of control could remain with the artist. Navein in hindsight, but at least we have this album, which includes a wonderful historical document in the form of Fari's "Bedroom"—The Flying Preacher. A dub version of this album appears on the recently re-released *One Way System*.

By the time of Volume 3, On-U's Ray & Alford were a moniker that could not be resisted. Gutsy folk it was, tinged with a misanthropic and sinister edge, but it was in strictly musical terms that *The Strange Patient*, "Disconnection," provides the most stunning opening of any On-U album with a simple from Tokyo's Sakenaka Shoko, who calls for Mark Tawney to be at his hysterical best in sharing his paranoiac *Strange Patient* and ex-Pooh Boy Bernard Fowler, now with The Skenes, delivers a glorious speed-fueled doo-wop in which Akabu reinforces the

emancipatory plea "To Be Free." Originally spread over double vinyl, there's not a weak track on the set and if listeners ever wondered what all the fuss was about surrounding On-U, they'd better check this.

Trinity Shanty Town
Determination: BLOOD AND FIRE
9/10/11 CD

the whole of reggae there are few more aesthetically rigorous rhythms than those generated under the guidance of Wivian Jackson, aka Yabby You. When the producer wanted a mellow, he carried tapes to the studio of one Osborne Ruddock, aka King Tubby. The results were perfection itself, capturing the 'breath sound' with heavy, heavy rhythms persisting in even the vocal and DJ versions. To Blood And Fire's credit, the label has never ignored the art of the DJ, and this immaculate set constitutes an original album plus five bonus tracks. Notable amongst the latter is '2907', Trinity's tribute to his mentor Big Youth, whose first major tune was '500 Shant'. For those even in part familiar with the music and producers of Yabby You, the release of this album will be special, as the DJ confidently riffs many of the Jesus Dread's greatest rhythms in a style which breathes their enduring quality.

Twilight Circus Dub Sound System Dub Voyage H Records H730

Having arrived back from the early 80s via whatever time-travel device he may be using, Ryan Moore has now come to a spooky understanding about what was happening in Jamaica in the studio with Scientist, Jemmy and The Roots Radics. Drums, bass and the overall meek all feed warm and live. The tracks entitled "K2000" and "Slace", along with a few more contemporary effects, bring us to the present day, and a conviction that Moore needs to come forward and confess how he's achieving what one hesitates to call authenticity. *Fresh dub!*

Various Artists De Historic
Return Of The Legendary King

Strut Glad Raggle Machine August 10 CD Over the past few years there has been a marked growth in the raggle market of the sound system type. So it was only a matter of time before this most peculiar of genres moved onto plastic. Of the few examples around, this one has got to be a first choice with veteran DJ 'Daddy' U Roy spanking all his pupils in a style he has made his own. Spread over two CDs, the sessions are from Birmingham and London. As one might hope and expect, DJs dominate the dancehall with U Brown, Josee Wales, Charlie Chapin and Brigadier Jerry ensuring a cultural vibe. Johnny Osbourne and the underrated Al Campbell sweeten up the

after vocally. Of course, this may only work if the sound is ramped up at painful volume and the air hangs heavy.

Various Artists King Size Dub
Volume 5 www.bachrecords.com

With Junior Delgado, Ben Sherman and Shara Nelson lining up for the opening three tracks, this could be mistaken for a late addition to On-U Sound's *Play It All Back* series. It turns out to be the nearest reggaedanceclub is going to get to K-Tel style mass appeal. With the remaining tracks including offerings from Simply Red (a tough Blood And Fire mix makes perfect sense), Smith & Pigg, The Ballistic Brothers (Earl 16), I Roy and Horace Andy with *Passive Attack*, all contributors are strictly non-filers, unlike the usual throwaway compilation. Recommended as a useful conversion tool for those who spread the love around amongst the heathen!

Various Artists Phil Pratt Thung
0004-88 50 826 8437 CD

biggest producers are not normally known for benignity and unswerving types. This is probably the reason why Phil Spector's name is not so well known these days and why his work has not had the exposure it deserves. Pressure Records have been keen to put out this compilation ever since the label was launched – the results prove their judgment to be correct. As usual with the label's compilations there is a judicious mix of vocal Q&D duos tracks, but here two solos dominate. Firstly there is the scorching, charting duet of Big Boy, who provides three tracks, including the set's wonderful title tune. And second on the 'voor' provided by the melodies of Bobby Klay, who also has three tracks. Along with charting Lynn Tait, Bobby Klay was a regular at Phil Spector's sessions and, as much as anybody, contributed to the feel and quality of the rhythm Dennis Brown, Al Campbell and Ken Boothe are the other featured vocalists on tunes which you will inevitably recognize but never have been able to put a name to.

Xterminator All Stars Dub

Down Babylon INFORMATION ITMO212 © Philip T. Fazio. Burrell seems to be one of the few Jamaican producers around willing to take the risk of scoring dub albums these days. Following up *MIK Dub* and *No Gabor* but with a better selection of rhythms, *Dub Down Babylon* showcases the smooth but tough mixing styles which characterize the work of Steven Stanton and Solja Hamilton. Modern steppers, lovers and roots all feature. Top track is 'Turbulences Can't Be No One Else' which streams through its allotted time at an unholy open rate. Also to be found are versions to some of last year's best tunes on the label from Morgan Heritage, Sizzla, Cocoa Tea and Matisyahu. Cocoa D's would be foolish to miss this.

in brief electronica

Reviewed by David Howell

Alva Noto Prototypen Mile Plateau

1999 CD
Rather than generating tension through explosive textures or abrasive noise, Carsten Nicolai's "prototypes" are precision shaped objects. With stunning clarity, he leads the listener in a series of loops of pops, crackles, clicks and other low-end activities, sparkling and glowing with the jinkly edge of pure electricity. Like Pan Sonic, he takes an audibly forensic approach to curating sounds, shapes and cold atmospheres. Tied untitled tracks unfold slowly, allowing you to feel your way around their surfaces and sound out their depths. Track two locks you into a slow motion funk groove of sonar bips and short crawling electronics. Tracks three and five open with patching tone bursts, the latter suddenly blowing out the ear — a potent reminder of the contained threat of the root material.

Esognomig Esognomig EP

005 12
Recorded in Meg's studios in spring 1998, Esognomig is the product of a live collaboration between Remon Bauer, Frank Dormert, Tina Frank and Florian Hecker, and Mouse On Mars duo Andi Toma and Jon St. Werner. On three long sections, the collaborators push, pull and guide the Improvis with a series of flicking, whirling sonic events. Each listening throws up fresh information, directing the ear in different directions. Simultaneously alien and marked with warm human interaction, Esognomig is society's alternative, publishing music.

Gamers In Exile Electro

Mayhem/Vibrasse UNRELEASABLE
UNRELEASABLE 12"

Arcade Audio Assault System

Planet/Panicle UNRELEASABLE 12"
These three 7 1/2 showcase Italian duo Gamers

In Exile Diff emerge, incorporating a label and multiple aliases. The coolly packaged vinyl reveals a gritty, dirty and adventurous diversity. Their latest successful guise, AARS, marks a cheesy move towards Old School arcade game nostalgia. The Space Invaders ripples and bips of "Planet Furner" speed up into an addictive, rhythmic flow. Gamers' excellent second single offers an awesome, intrinsic slice of milanese electro. "Electro Playmen" opens a cavernous space of spectral shimmer. It droned over punching beats and leaking bass. Ripping tracers scour the track, with machine guns and frantic loops increasing the panic. Recalling Clock DVA, the flip displays a luscious, slow piano motif over stuttering body/funk beats and dirty sheets of noise. Finally, "Vibrose" is a beeline incursion in soaked ambience. Gamers operate in a zone where the beat and melody remain in the fore. Old School yet gritty, funky and inventive enough to warrant further attention.

Hecker [R+] Iso/Clock Heso 04

Mantaining Meg's expressive stream of glitch motifs, this 12 tracker features a host of artists flexing their samplers and hard disks, remaking sound files from Florian Hecker's 1998 debut *I / a o 1619/75*. The rollout includes Bruce Gilbert, Lethro, Jim O'Rourke, Marcus Schmickler, Domo Yoshida and Pan Sonic's lipo Vaserim. Operating with the cold, pathological detachment of sci-fi novelist J.G. Ballard's protagonists, their methodologies reveal curiously obsessive behaviour. They retreat into the laptop and look for snags, with an all consuming interest in tiny details, textures, shifting angles. Francisco Lopez buries himself deeper in the spirit of the original — poring down to an ultra-minimal volume, he forces the ear to focus on the relentless audio

activity. A brilliant Gelsen mix submerges their normally dominant beat to faint, fuzzy kicking beneath a pall of stretching, buckling micro-textures.

Kid-606 Attitude VHM 1ST VHM 11 7"

Finally, the track that's been busting my head for more than a year now gets its release. Flagrantly flaunting copyright, "Attitude" burns seminal US punkers The Moblis, while the flip turns into NWA's classic "Straight Outta Compton". Both sides see the Kid pushing remix practice to fresh levels of raw, hands-on inventiveness. Tearing at the original with both reverence and rape, approach here is critical. He grabs tracks wholesale, then fillets, mixes, stretches and pulls them through the Macintosh mangle. The emerging loop rhythms are chopped apart, inverted, sent spinning out across the spiky debris. Awesome.

Klute We R The Other CERTIFICATE 18

CERT 18 12"
One of the more consistently interesting producers in drum 'n' bass, Klute again delivers a strong, rhythmically inventive 12" whose parameters expand way beyond the peripatetic vagaries of so much of the scene. The drone 'n' bleep-heavy structure of "We R The Ones" pulses all the right buttons. But for maximal pleasure, flip over to "Drive Down" for a stunning, little (live?) rhythm workout in the mantrix-funk vein of classic A Certain Ratio. Klute displays lithe snarls and tons that rise and contagiously grip the body with its driving, primal rhythms and the warm bass blasts that stab out alongside rippling sound rushes and deep DMSK locks.

Lexaunculp Oh Here's Some

NOISES FROM LA 12010 12"
Lexaunculp is 19 year old Californian Alex Graham. This so-called "approach" on that Skam/Schematics/Funkstörung school of electronica, yet it disappointingly fails to deliver anything significantly new. However, it is both adventurous and cleverly constructed, with tracks constantly moving

and morphing — their architectural designs only revealing themselves in the passage of time. The standout track "Blue" is a dense fractured piece of fucked-up high-top beats and splintering, reconstructing rhythms. Flowing on seamlessly, Pleasure is flashes pitchshifting, scolding breaks beneath a synthy, synthwave melody. Solid enough, but it leaves you craving that extra something.

Orchard Warszawa Hobby Industries

H006 12"
The sixth release on Copenhagen label Hobby Industries marks the return of native Danish producer Orchard. So cool tracks draw the listener through a fracturing maze of jerky beats and neatly plied textures. Gritty, angular outcrops and strings of binary noise puncture through its stream of beats and orbiting rhythms. Ripping with interlocking, music box melodies, the EP foregrounds a strong invasive sensibility downwound and nostalgic, sloping coolly against the shattering flow "To End Relations" is a tad twee and inconsequential but impressively prickly tracks like "Grassroots" and "Beats" bear that crucial quality of mutating and sneakily reconstructing themselves before your ears.

snD Systeme Medley CITY CENTRE

OFFICE 0000004 12"
Shredded-based duo snD are another obsessive, autodidactic splinter unit. Despite the hype, five found much of their output hot and meek, but at least they plot their own oblique, idiosyncratic path through the disks and cuts outside, leaving you uncertain as to just where you should place them. "Systems Medley" configures a slow, subtly shirring, bassy jerk through a nuanced field of haze shimmer and pop. This endearing minimal funk leaves you intrigued and uncertain rather than awed. Though universally enjoyable in their own right, the nine locked grooves of the B side are essentially a neat, variegated arsenal of hypnotic, pulse patterns popping, punching loops, drones, bassy snare and off-centre beats.



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bill laswell

100mc live vs 100mc 2000

in brief hiphop

Reviewed by Dave Tompkins

Dilated Peoples 'The Platform'

CD/EP, 100mc 100
Rakia Incense and Evidence translated
their flighty and evocative melody into dual
essence. On "Hearts in the Making" Evidence
takes the chrome lineages. "My mind's a
PMD clock ticking onto tones." Regarding LA
Hip-Hop, Dilated is more about King Toot's
swagger than James Junior or G-Funk. On
"Pushing Limits" Rakia Incense
understands alone: "Don't go to clubs where
stars got on my navel" rather go to Griffith
Park and observe. Meanwhile DJ Babu cuts
syllables within 12 inches of their short-
breathed lives. On "Expanding From" he knifes
through frantic strings with a Jew quote as
Rakia begins. "I used to trade books when
signs appeared/forward scientists made signs"
Evidence understates. "It ain't where you put
your words it's where you don't." "Shape Of
Things To Come" is decorated by a knuckle
lock synchronized with guitar. The Platform's
genrebook includes Acyclohexane, Alkaloids, B
Red and Planet Asia.

DITC DITC 100mc 100mc 100mc 100mc
Message from someone who just moved to
New York: you can tell a Lord Finesse fan
shit. Finesse's Digger in The Grotes crew
enjoys a staunch loyalty. With producers
Diamond, Show and Buckwild, DITC revels
in both the direct approach to the head,
and bringing the housing down. The choxy
strings on "Thick" (mixed by DJ Premier)
are in not pursuit of scuffling piano and
vibes. Show is at the best on AG's "Weekend
Night" and the best peak guitar on "Get
Your's". It's ominous and sad when the line
says, "I stay baller/under the up". The late
Big Pun heaves and the hook goes: "As long
as you breathe life you gotta get yours"
Show's piano (courtesy of ELP) on "Where
Ya At" paints the block with each key. KRS-
One speaks the well-earned truth on "Drop
It Heavy". "I represent peace and knowledge
but I will contradict that." On "Tribute" OC
talks about his last words with Big L and
heads lock at the ground with nodding
respect.

Freundeskreis Hailt Dich An
Premier Lamba Faust 100mc 100mc
career motives 12"
Hip-hop from Stuttgart, Germany. The B side
talks over a 1977 Lee Perry-produced
cadenza for Junior Marmalade "Police And
Thieves" (inspired in German's 11 "All the
crimes committed day by day, no one need to
stop it in any way." On the B side, Marmalade
sings as Bobs' best with a singular rhinot
and Fender impressions. Nice.

Ghostface Killah Supreme

CD/EP, 100mc 100mc 100mc 100mc
Rakia's Imminently late for us was for
Weir, so Ghostface springs out of the
dramatic "Rakia's 100mc" and the day
is sunny. Smack 100mc. On
"Highly Healthy" he takes the
Commanders melody and explains,
"Moshon keeps me out the greatest/ write
this on Danny rap after his funeral on one
tree thinking his alive a following me".
A Wallabee like magnet, Ghost warbly dips,
dyes and bleeds. Rakia like "sneak-out"
Calvin (Cooking) and "siding off like King
Warren" just sound good. Ghost greases
over Baby Huey's "Hard Times", an Axiel
piano and a deranged, manually looped
drone that would induce the RZA to rat-out
his own best secrets. With at least nine
producers (Pharmacia's wms), Ghost is
everywhere, getting kicked on Queen
Elizabeth at the opera, starting Zulu Nation
chapters in front of Macy's or quoting Doris
Forster's "Holy Wars (Live)". Hat the soul sub
on "Wu Banga", in which the GZA reflects
"Hear the Wu Tang song as my eyes cut
down the globe". The song lists ("Cheerful
Laghost") and sequencing are tucked so
things aren't what they appear to be, sunny.

Sonny Hopsom The Mighty

Burner PHILLY ARCHIVES PHILLY CO
In 1969 Sonny Hopsom ruled APT soul
radio on Philadelphia's WHAT station. On
this original mix, The Watts 103rd St Band
and Eddie Bo's "Hock & Sings" (used by the
Tuff Crew in 1991) sound rawer than poetry
speak. Between songs, Hopsom became
engaged, a one-man band spicing him
riffs and drum rolls while jabbing collages
like his Bomb Squad intercom breaks
while placing himself in the mix. Hopsom
talks over "Let A Woman Be A Woman" as
if he was one of O'Jays' Blowers. "Sounds like
the girl's walking backwards to me." An ad
blares "James Brown, proud black man
uses Ministry of Black on his naturally
beautiful hair." After Sonny plays fabulous
menowar over Bill Doggett's "Honky Tonk
Popcorn", there's a newfangled Nixon
speech followed by Indian Indian funk. "I
got to give you chance to dance a hole in
your soul, baby" says the Mighty Burner.

Non Phixion Black Hechopters

CD/EP, 100mc 100mc 100mc 100mc
"Black Hechopters" is surely the first Hip-Hop
track based on a klezmer sample. Think
Yankee, the rest is just as original. M.C's Bill
Selzer and Goretex rap that like an over-

catered Mafel, rhyme "hicks" with
"wreper", hallucinate about the CIA, the UN
and behind a pale horse. "They Got." notes
a more lyrical best and is more explicitly
political but is just as good (Peter Shapiro)

Sonic Sum The Spirit Annex

CD/EP, 100mc 100mc 100mc 100mc
A quartet comprising Bob Smith, Fred
Ones, Erik MO and DJ Jun, Sonic Sum
belongs to the same school as Saul Williams
and Mike Ladd, at the boundaries
between HeHoP and spoken word well-
known compatriots go for a kind of urban
congregation equals modern madness
approach. Sonic Sum offer a more hypnotic,
glazed vision of the sunny arena. Less of a
beats than a refusal, vocal-inclined
Smith sits on his window seat looking out
on the street below. He's "You alone to be
abandoned. Back on most of gongos, has
seen too many things today" and waits the
night to evade his memory. The morose
surrealism of Smith is matched by
impressionistic, depressive Hip-hop beats
that owe as much to Debussy, Sade and
Eric Dolphy as they do to Premier. The
Beetles and Bob James. Peter Shapiro

Various Artists Ego Trip's The

Big Playbook 100mc 100mc 100mc 100mc
Ego Trip magazine once in the term
"rockstar dick" and their Big Playbook
released through New York label Rakia, is
similarly poetic. Lord Shalmy says that if he
was a porch, he could succeed in a
flying pen on "My Mic Is On Fire". North
Carolina's Buzze Boys provide another
reason why Hip-hop was so good in 1991.
Best of all, there's Rimmelbeats vs K-Rob's
"Beet Pop", in all its 10-10 enclosed guitar
Magna can laude semantics like "Monoclonal
Pentamer to the stock" named me of what
Lloyd Bridges said in Airplane. "I guess I
picked the wrong day to cut sailing glider."

Various Artists Ropeladder 12

100mc 100mc 100mc 100mc
There's nothing better than a bunch of
British schoolchildren singing "Dropping from
a dead donkey's eye." So goes Jett into as
Ropeladder 12, a compilation full of smart
ambitious young people with lots to say
such as Baltimore's Lullabian and Apton's
ecological song. On the intro "Ladder",
Cincinnati's Mr. Ochs and Ochs assemble
factory waste, a nomic sad, cavernous
carga and a violin that could tremble
through alone. Dose One wins Battle Race
2000 on "Inventor's Cry." Over a last man
on earth organ, he shakes a modern pencil
gl at breakneck Bone Thug speed, saying,
"Forgive me talking to myself with a tone, a
spoiled kid with a smug language in my
hand and a gun cabinet thick swinging open
in the long den. I'm going into spring/linger
some one next life."

in brief jazz

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

Rhodri Davies/John Bisset

Malbusae 711010 CD

London Electric Guitar Orchestra

Whobla 211010 CD

Malbusae records in the distinctly non-metropolitan location of Aberystwyth on the west coast of Wales. Davies plays harp with calligraphic restraint and directness that is matched by Bisset's guitar work. Strings gently buzz, when, rattle and chime in a predominantly delicate exchange consciously using silence and recorded with striking immediacy. Bisset's contribution to Malbusae recalls acoustic players such as Fred Smith and John Russell. On "Whobla" which releases a graphic score by Fred Frith, he is embedded within the characteristically brainy, too-included orchestration of LEGO. On each of seven movements an initial solo of wending guitar vocabulary is built up through a looping and augmentation technique to produce often dense sound masses. At times the layering grows cluttered, but there are diverting passages scattered throughout.

Toby Delius 4Tet Toby's Micboy

CD 154 CD

Bennink/Chadbourne/Kondo

Just Bunkin' 90 Golden Years 718 2020

Given the potential sweetness intrinsic to any situation where drummer Han Bennink and cellist Tristan Honsinger are in attendance, *Toby's Micboy* is a low key affair. Delius is a robust tenorman with evident affinity for the sturdy bass of Joe Williamson. The group encompasses a wide stylistic range, from cabaret evocations to abstract forms. A blinding rather than blinding set full of interest.

Since 1980 recording from Rotterdam's Jazz Bureau offers 90 minutes of rapidly esoteric theatre courtesy of three unsurpassed masters of metamusical perversion. No track listing, no formal structure, just the concurrence of whims as curious incalculables are pursued, then abandoned for others. Trumpeter Tashjian Kondo also plays percussion, Bennink shifts from drums to piano and various wind instruments, guitarist Eugene Chadbourne draws upon personal effects. Gloriously inconsequential and unduly entertaining.

Dominic Duval with The CT

String Quartet Under The

Pyramid 0110279 CD

Learn, tense interaction between bassist Duval, cellist Tomas Ulrich, Jason Huang on violin and Solter String Quartet member Ron Lawrence on viola. All the players pour

a sneaky sound — mean rather than mellow — but even when the riffing is funny, there is an evident concern for the play of contrasting textures and textures. An earnest purposeful and highly animated conversation with plenty of scope for divergence amongst the voices.

Charles Gayle Ancient Of Days

Intero 141010 KRUZ CD

Gayle is relatively relaxed mood displays a capacity to fashion and develop melodic lines barely hinted at in his justly praised sound and fury recordings. Thematic safety nets however loosely they are fastened diminish the thrill a little, but Gayle is still riveting, even when his confrontational edge is constrained and deployed to reflect or accentuate. Regular drummer Michael Wenterly, sister Jane Johnson, and Jerry Booth on bass lend solid and respectful support.

Gold Sparkle Band Nu Soul

Zodiac 504101 CD

Recorded in Atlanta, Georgia, this is the third album from The Gold Sparkle Band. The quartet's enigmatic name masks some serious playing by remarkably assured musicians. Whether elaborating a meditative theme or blowing freely from some Coleman-like head, trumpeter Roger Ruzon and reedist Charles Waters are unequivocal. They favour a big sound and bold articulation. The rhythm section — Andrew Blunk on drums and Adam Roberts on bass — is appropriately vigorous.

Wayne Horvitz American

Bandstand 504101 KRUZ CD

Wayne Horvitz & Zony Mash

Upper Egypt 0110279 KRUZ CD

Keyboardist Horvitz leads two formations of his Seattle based group featuring bassist Keith Love, drummer Andy Rock and Timothy Young on guitar. American Bandstand has Horvitz and Love unopposed while the distinctive Zony Mash sound centres on his Hammond B-3 and other electric instruments. On piano, Horvitz is economical yet lyrical, never venturing far from the strong melodic hooks which characterise his compositions, but constantly working small surprises. The others finely attuned to his discreet playing, complement it perfectly. "Upper Egypt" is a reading of the Pharos Sanders piece, but as on their two previous albums Zony Mash who take their name from a song by The Mekers, serve up an infectious groove of stripped down, snappy funk and hauntingly deep chilled grooves. An irresistible antidote to grey days

Brian Irvine Borsadsky's

Machines 141010 KRUZ CD

Seemingly Paul Darnall joins Irvine Belfort based 14 piece ensemble to perform the rigorous and imaginative composition. It is grounded in repetition yet shifts continually modulating between clamour and calm, breathless urgency and the calculated detachment of patchwork. Imagine the outcome if Louis Andriessen's minimalist jazzers Orkest De Volharding had come under the direction of autodidactic sculptor Jean Tinguely. In fact, work by Russian kinetic sculptor Eduard Borsadsky provided the impetus for Irvine's invigorating music.

Steve Lucy Three NY Capers &

Quintus 141010 512 CD

With the inclusion of "Quintus", live Lucy originals now comprise this 1979 concert recording, initially issued in 1981. The music is entirely characteristic: terse melodies, compulsive repetition still agile variations, analytical insistence and energetic vigour. Bassist Rayne Boykins, who worked with Sun Ra during the 1960s, is here subdued, even introspective. Drummer Dennis Charles, on the other hand, proves an ideal, knowing foil for the animated precision of Lucy's unmistakable, chase yet brilliant soprano.

Alex Maguire/Michael

Moore 141010 KRUZ CD

The latest release on Moore's own label is an outstanding collaboration with pianist Maguire on a set of originals, plus pieces by Ellington, Gershwin and Stan Bergen. The mood often verges on melancholy and Moore, who plays alto as well as clavier, plays at his most elegant and expressive. Maguire proves a sensitive yet harmonically adventurous partner.

Joe McPhee Tenor & Fallen

Angels 141010 544 CD

Despite the fact HUT label's championing of Joe McPhee's music, it remains shamefully overlooked in many quarters where it should be celebrated. Tenor first released in 1977 is a great unrecorded soprano record, visceral and immensely thoughtful. McPhee is a total musician, a generous player who withholds nothing from the conception or execution of these vibrant, enigmatic solos. The concluding "Fallen Angels" previously unavailable sustains the contained power.

Pachora Art Acting Factory KRUZ CD

Pachora are among those musicians currently seeking to develop understanding of improvisation which is not based exclusively to a grounding in jazz. Drummer Jim Black, Icelandic bass guitarist Sili Svendsen, Chris Speed on clavier and Brad Shepik on electric sax (a long-necked 1201 derby double in adaptations of Eastern European and Middle Eastern folk traditions. Like their two previous albums, the result is refreshingly buoyant and consistently persuasive.

Dave Saul Quintet Reverence

ASC 84 CD

Keany Wheeler & Brian

Dickinson Still Waters 141010 KRUZ CD

Trumpeter Wheeler is 70 this year. Today his tone may not carry quite the crystalline authority of past decades, but seasoned suppleness compensates for any loss of transparency, and he remains a majestic player. Pianist Dave Saul's compositions gain immeasurably from his dignified soloing, and from the stalwart presence of bassist Chris Laurence and Stan Sulzmann on saxophone and flute. With fellow Canadian Dickinson attentive at the piano, Wheeler's distinctive Hugheson sound still more eloquent. The music on *Still Waters* is graceful and beautifully balanced, technically accomplished and pervasively controlled.

Fredy Studer/Jin Hi Kim/

Joëlle Léandre/Dorothea

Kisch 3-13 141010 1484 1034 CD

Perennating Studer is put through his paces in three distinct contexts, with vocalist Schürch, bassist Léandre and Korean kornajo player Kim. The music is highly focused and generally rather austere. The Swiss singer soars and takes singing saw to probe further into the high register. Both strong players hug the ground with low, nuanced sounds. Studer negotiates the requirements of each stratum with versatility. The CD settles to a point, but it tantalisingly raises the broader prospect of these musicians recording as a quartet.

The Sun Ra Arkestra Live At

Praxos 84 10 Golden Years 0110 2020

At its best, Sun Ra's music is as good as it gets. The two hour set was recorded live in Athens in 1984 with saxophonists Marshall Allen and John Gilmore both in action. It starts with some ferocious blowing that jugs well. But such enigmatic moments occur only rarely during the rest of a concert which offers plenty of churning, quirky renditions of standards such as "Mars, the Sun" and "Cocktails For Two" and a few Arkestra favourites, somewhat diminished in appeal by the cavernous acoustics. For committed acolytes rather than the uninitiated.

Vienna Art Orchestra All That

Scratch 1410 2020 CD

After winning plaudits for their take on Erik Satie, Matthias Ruggs's VAO turn their sights on Johann Strauss, with a piece by Suppe thrown in for good measure. Passed through an Ellingtonian filter, the music of the waltz becomes miraculously palatable, and The VAO demonstrates once more that although it has become something of an institution in European jazz it has not none of its vitality, vision or wit.

in brief outer limits

Reviewed by David Keenan

Auto-Rotation uses

110274-01

Unlabeled noise is sourced from the sound of accidental bullet impacts on flesh (I give him time). *Academy of Sound* instead consists of five tracks created from the sound of water. It's a fairly difficult concept to get excited about. Unlike Aube's previous *Pages From The Book*, which used the Bible as its sound source, water doesn't carry much charged resonance for anyone. The results are fairly slight: starting off with mistletoe drumming and swish and gradually becoming harsher and more processed sounding. Standout track has to be: *After The Strömen* – which sounds like a heavy drinker urinating.

Kim Cascone cathodeFlower@gmail.com

BIOCHEM. J. 1990, 267, 1-10

It's a thick, microscopic ice particles, coxide/lowers recalls the desolate solastrom of Thomas: Over or Main. Although it lasts five tracks, it is essentially one seamless, dietary shift through cloudy shifting atmospheres. Working from a studio in an abandoned computer maintenance room, Cascone soaks up the ghostly influences of his environment—a monumental Cold War cabinet. Like the rumble of steam through industrial pipes, he overflows slow shimmering waves. It immerses the listener in treacherous undercurrents, blasts of static and swirls of cold digital sound. (David Huxley)

Other Music For Air Bands *review*

2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 2681, 2682, 2683, 2684, 2685, 2686, 26

Huse. For all Black Starts start with all the radio static and siren-blasting Cold War paranoia so beloved of such UK amateur electronics as Maum Vernon Arts Lab and Deformation only to completely turn tables when a rhythm section with all the beautiful power of jamming-era Black Flag comes raging over the top. This US-setter combine the ferocity of B0's hardcore with the epic apocalyptic of Goatshead 'You Black Emperor', indulging in stop-start dynamics and tempo changes with such split-second accuracy that it's almost enough to make you rethink the whole concept of rock roll. I said almost.

Illusion Of Safety Mort Aux

Varian Scan 2441 NO Methyl CD

Bussan Of Safety have been active in the post-Industrial power electronics scene since the early '90s, their line-up at one point included Jim O'Rourke. Dan Burke has been a constant from the start, and here he is the

like contributing to some virtuosic performance to sound pieces together, inspired by the On the Border album. WPRO 105 often deal with a wide range of themes and with the emotionality of good music, but here Burke is content just to make sounds. The first piece, in particular, is strikingly beautiful as a cover of a Philip Brook and I find it a similar manner to those with Wouter's Solitaire for Jean.

Francisco Lopez Orlando.HQ1

© 1999 Blackwell Science Ltd

Francisco Lopez *Untitled* 1994
Pencil, 11 x 10

Lopez's collaborative *Navy Music* (1994) is a piece that is primarily a music for working with sounds in a very fluid, malleable level. His performance, in ten days, even at first as a critique, still appears to open up a landscape behind the living text. Some 50 minutes into *Untitled* (1994), things seemed to really kick off with a new soaring atmosphere that virtually shook the entire building. Then I realized that it was simply the bin too outside my door. Actually, nothing happened at all. If you listen hard (or,ugh) with headphones, you can get really caught up in the whirr of your CD player. On the June 18 plunk for *Untitled* (1994) played in the room that it occupies, Lopez said: "We hope... these things to you don't have to be."

Pantaleimon Trees-Hold Time

[illegible]**RST** Warm Planes cruise, home

1999-2000

At 41, Mooney is one of the most conservative sounding of the new breed of New Zealand indie musicians. Across the space of his three previous albums, *Event Horizon* and *Electric* (on EMI's Peace) he's taken the guitar's potential for large-scale electronic disruption

to extremes, reducing its six strings to conductors for noise signals. On *Warm Places* he pines things down even more, with horizontal mounts of electronic mimicking the storm-crackle of looting pylons. Like Alan Lamb's investigations into the sonarries of telephone wires, there's a similar feel of invasive uninhabited space which, rather than alienating, actually draws you in and thick layers of organic pulse.

Bruce Russell *Maximalist*

M. et al. / *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 26(1)[illegible]

Sensorband: Aardvark sensor

[illegible]

Siamese Temple Ball Siamese

Temple Ball. SAVING TEMPLE BALL: Still, with a name like Southwest Temple Ball, no surprise to see these New Yorkers lost

With communal flautist units as *Yu Ho* (Yu: *Tai* Mañai Travellers and Ghost as inspirations, but really they on themselves as inspiration with such a parodic twist. Indeed their sound seems to draw more on the primitive ethnic music captured on the Soviet Museum Of Manmade series of discs that Tzetzé released a few years ago. On their self-said collection of their own recordings, various acoustic instruments are struck, blown and flared while tabla and combined duo percussion propel the whole thing upwards through smoky dares. The degraded tape quality only adds to the overall field recording feel of the piece. I can't think of anyone else – except perhaps the Sun City Girls – whose improvisations are as flailing utopian and yet so pointedly ideological.

Alexandre St-Onge ¹Ude

Machete Et Deux Trous machete

[illegible]

Vibacathedral Orchestra

crustalians!! Darkstars are a new, if not a little tired, band led by Neil Campbell, previously a member of The A-Band. Their sound is a melodic dose of tinkling tones (melodica), swirling bows which draw equally intricate, jazzy dance melody in the style of the 1940s American street composer "Porgy and Bess" and primitive "Venus In Furs" style guitar drone. Wireheadria are more focused and less whimsically played than The Band, though their instant composition is held in anchor by little seemingly melodic sways while all around budding swarms of buzz collide in mid-air. At their best, they sound like the Early Music folks, spinning slow-living on dainty drone machines.

charts

Playlists from the outer limits of planet sound

Mixing It 15

DJ Food Killa disco (Ninja Tune)
Morphine The Night (Rykodisc)
Recoil Love (Mute)
Lalo Schiffrin Dirty Harry Anthology (Akash)
Arto Lindsay Neon Chills (Wynona)
Mike Davis Complete Beatles Box Set (Capitol)
Takashi Mizuhashi & Bob Brooman Jr. (3rd Floor)
David Byrne World Music Network
Orchestra 33 1/3 Machine Break (Constellation)
Yo La Tengo And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside Out (Matador)
The For Carnation The For Carnation (Drowned)
Jerry Goldsmith Chivalry OST (Varese Sarabande)
Susumu Yokota Magic Thread (Leaf)
She One Aungmye (Other)
Susan Deyhim Madman Of God (Crammed Discs)
Iraida Yampova Chamber Music (private recording)
 Licensed by Raven/Santa Fe Part: Raven, Part: ABC (A&M)
 10-45-11 30pm Web: www.boc.com/mixing

Belgrade Sound System 15

Jeanne Lee In These Last Days (FMP)
Kid Keala Seratchatchatchatchatch (Part-A-Ninja Tune)
Blackalicious Turnout (MCA Wax)
Lob The Hole (Death Bunny)
Broadcast Hurricane Without A Mustard (Underdog Records/Warner)
Primal Scream Blood Money (Greatest)
Christopher De Babalon Kid-606 Split 12" (Fat Cat)
Lithops Me We (Song)
Laika Good Looking Blues (Too Pure)
Twilight Circus Dub Horse (M)
Maurizio M5 (Cham Reunion)
Lee Perry Techno Party (Anwa)

The Isolatorist Hydrogen Slush (Jazz Fudge)
Dust Static & Plastic Delivery (Mont Eye Q)
Do Make Say Think Goodbye Enemy Airship (Constellation)
 Originally: Belgrade Sound System Radio 82-82 Bridge
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Raw Musics 15

Various Anthology Of American Folk Music (Smithsonian)
 Followed
Various American Primitive Volume 1: Pre-War Gospel (Revenant)
Various The Music Of Kentucky: Early American Rural Classics (1927-1937) Volumes 1 & 2 (Yazoo)
The Carter Family The Victor Recordings (Rounder)
Various Old-Time Music Of West Virginia Volumes 1 & 2 (County)
Various Georgia String Bands (1928-1930) (Document)
Various Times Aft' Like They Used To Be Vols. 1-4 (Yazoo)
Leadbelly The Library Of Congress Recordings (Rounder)
The Skillet Lickers Old-Time Fiddle Tunes And Songs From North Georgia (County)
Various Country Blues Collectors Items (1928-1933) (Document)
Dick Boggs Country Blues (Revenant)
Bessie Smith Modern Times (Deja Vu)
Various Piano Blues Rarities (1926-1940) (Document)
Robert Johnson The Complete Recordings (Columbia)
McKinney's Cotton Pickers 1928-1931 (Giant Of Jazz)
 Compiled by Luther Johnson/Ryan Music, WMAA Atlanta 88.8 FM
 Georgia USA Sundays 9-11pm Web: www.wmao.org

Post-Millennial 15

Various Voices From The Real World (Real World)
DJ Food A Dub Play Of Food 10 (Ninja Tune)
Various Suave's Festivals Favorites And Work (Smithsonian Folkways)
Various Bent Bouquet (Creeping Bent)
Various Jazzcut (Cherry)
Yo La Tengo And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside Out (Matador)
Lazycane Embargo (Hot Tam)
Kid Keala Caramel Turned Syndrome (Ninja Tune)
Virginia Rodriguez Nox (Hornbush)
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William Hooker Eternal Breath: Gene Of Frank (The Last Whole Dog)
Pole 12" (KLF SM)
Dorger & Laura Cramwell Upsidedown (Jumbo)
Grateful Dead Dick's Picks Vol. 16 (Grateful Dead)
Anti-Pop Consortium The Tragic Epilogue (75 Ark)
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Tarwater Animals: Surs & Atoms (Kitty-Yol)
M5 Oldies Strum (Rune Grammofon)
Will Oldham Guapercost Blues Vol. 2 (Domino)
Various Harry Smith's Anthology Of American Folk Music Vol. 4 (Revenant)
The Infestations Gun Hill Road (Big Dade)
 Licensed by The Wire Sound System

Mark Ribot



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label lore

No. 04/



Time Stereo

Address PO Box 531671, Lyons, MI 48153-1671, USA E-mail: ems@time-stereo.com

Distribution International order only

Run by Cash B with assistance from Warren D

Description Home cooked limited edition imprint focusing on the wacky sounds of the minuscule Michigan rock-n-roll scene, with attractions from various scattered neo-roots

Roster includes His Name Is Alive, Little Princess, Noise Camp, Electronic Must, New Grape, Mysic, Kool Orchestra, The Wholes, Incapacitants, Process

Diagram I'm Safe

Brief history Time Stereo began in 1994

selling self-produced books and cassette recordings only. Between 1995-96, we put out our first CDs, by Free Wade and Japanese noise

merchants Incapacitants. 1997 saw the introduction of a low-budget Video Shelf

in 1998, with the acquisition of CD-R burners, we began making custom audio releases, and have so far put out 34 releases

Statement of intent Black and white sleeves with a dash of red. Our catalogues feature short but accurate descriptions of our releases. Time Stereo hard made. Every cover is cut, scored and folded by Dawn B

Other activities Products line (butler, mounted scene, white tables, kitchen gloves, garden worms), annual outdoor Noise Camp, and outdoor festival with plenty of Time Stereo artists and surreal activities.

Howlown's annual 'Haunted Tube' (you crawl in the dark through the loud, scary mask, book sack, UFO doctor, jmol alien autopsy), devil's robot (where that clumsy robot fell down and gave all the kids candy!)

A recent performance by the devil's robot set a new Time Stereo performance record of four minutes before the sound man shut it down

Future plans Breakfast Radio income, release of 150 CD, 'Haunted Tube' going to Europe in June 2000, following the Noise Camp tour of Europe in 1999. As for the Noise Camp, there are plans for a Japanese set, calling on 15 artists

MSRR in Oct/Nov 2000

Choice cuts Incapacitants - Asset Without Liability, Little Princess - Forever Tube

(info and inquiries: Dawn B)

multi media

Rob Young logs onto the **Knitting Factory** spinning online yarns



New dimensions in jazz: The Knitting Factory's wired Hollywood venue

Change is often thought to occur on the periphery, but in the neglected world of modern jazz, the white heat of technology is currently powering a whole new way of seeing things at a New York institution previously thought of as a central landmark of improvised music. The Knitting Factory's claim to have been the first club in the world with a Website may be a little dangerous, as is its backup boss to have also been the first to broadcast an event live over the World Wide Web. But there's no doubting the magnitude of its latest move to open new horizons for its own, practically trademarked brand of artistic networking via a raft of initiatives across both the USA and Europe.

From the Kri's humble beginnings, it started life in 1986 as a dusty, slightly woolly speck in a boisterous upstart factory in one of the Big Apple's former working districts. It went on to establish the Knitting Factory record label. Now the year 2000 finds Kri boss Michael Dorf trotting the globe, laying out plans for new KriFacs in Hollywood and Berlin, with longer term designs on franchises elsewhere in Europe. A mooted plan to zone a Knitting Factory close to

London's South Bank Centre a couple of years ago was thwarted by a combination of licensing and occupation complications, but the organisation still have their eyes on the English capital.

In Hollywood, Dorf has found the cultural landscape very different from that of Lower Manhattan when he opened the first Kri's doors. The LA operation, which opened last month, is sited bang in the heart of a burgeoning entertainment district, and the 10,000 square foot space rubs noses with such fun magnets as Dorey's El Capitan Theatre, a new nightclub owned by Quincy Jones, and various themed fun palaces. Dorf's venture has even met a warm reception from no less an authority figure than City Council member Jackie Goldberg.

Equipped with an intimate bar, as well as a 400 capacity performance space, the new Kri looks destined to continue the high standards of music presentation audiences have come to expect from its New York parent. But more importantly, the two buildings have attained added value in the form of the technologies with which Dorf hopes to realise his dream of a perpetually

connected virtual music domain. "These clubs completely change our online landscape," enthuses Knitting Factory employee Guy Compton, surveying the present and future of KriFac as enterprises. All clubs will be connected to each other, where artists will jam on opposite coasts in real-time, as well as patrons being able to share a virtual drink with friends in other clubs, while tuning into a performance in any space. Its fully wired, state of the art facility will complete the vision which only started in NYC. There will be a centrally located, glass enclosed control room where patrons will be able to view all activities, from audio to video recording, to Webcasting, virtual jamming and the like.

The capacity to place audiences and musicians on an intimate footing, regardless of the physical distances separating them, is a natural continuation of the Kri's original schedule of unusual and unlikely collaborations (such as, for example, throwing apocalypse jazz drummer Willem Hooser on stage with DJ Qwey). The programme that formalises this three-pronged approach to curation has been dubbed "KriActive". "A few months back," explains Guy Compton, "we closed down our smallest performance space, gutted it, and rigged and wired it to be a fully functioning Web studio. We produce unique interactive programming for original broadcast over the Internet." They have already hosted a beguiling range of online intercontinental events, among them raffish Scottish singer-songwriter Mumus in his Old School geekster guise the Earl of

biographical information, archived interviews and artist discographies, as well as viewing the performance in question, either as it happens or after downloading the stored result.

Come, then, are the days when institutions such as Britain's BBC acted as the often gnomish curators of legacies, periodically erasing — for reasons of space — invaluable artistic documents, now lost forever. KriMedia have teamed up with Liquid Audio to infuse an enormous library of recordings and video footage. At the venues themselves, they are creating an unprecedented body of sound and visual capture, obsessively documenting each and every performance on DAT and VHS, then making them available over the Web instead of leaving them to rot in storage. This is instant access taken to a new level of transparency.

Virtual communities and electronic hybridity have informed and defined the character of electronic music of the most of the past decade, but when applied to music with longer traditions, like jazz, such technologies have too often simply dressed mutton up as lamb. But Michael Dorf's initiative is the most credible manoeuvre yet in suggesting a possible future for jazz. Improved music is as much about interaction and a constantly swirling body of ideas, matching on each artist's work as, say, a global remix project. With this in mind, perhaps, Dorf has also inaugurated the Website www.jazz2.com, intended as a first port of call for wired jazz aficionados. "The marketplace basically demanded it," says Compton. "There was no definitive jazz site. It is not a Kri vehicle, but for all the community to share and use. Jazz e-commerce is ten per cent of the online music market, as opposed to three per cent offline." In recognition, Jazz2.com has already been selected as official host of the Billboard Jazz Conference in June of this year — the jazz community recognises quickly the need for such online representation. Jazz2.com contains a searchable database of artist information, encyclopedic entries on jazz history, information of upcoming gigs and festivals by artist, city, venue, festival or date. The Norstar radio player can be obtained from the site to hear a daily stream of jazz recordings; and there are plenty of pointers to online shops and mail order outlets that service this music sector.

Finally, this coming summer, the Kri will be running what they call "the most connected festival in the world". Perhaps such giant steps could only have been taken by an organisation with its ears so close to the ground. Watch this space. L. Westes www.knittingfactory.com, www.krimedia.com, www.jazz2.com



Amiga, contemplating 18th century technology, a DJ meltdown led by Hip-hop pioneer Koolhaas, and individual manifestations by Tony Conrad, Elliott Smith, Suicide and a gallery of local cabaret taking part in activities such as "bozzie decorations of jazz compositions emotional investigations into the inner lives of musicians, new and presentations of film music, intercontinental DJ collaborations". With something like 30 hours of programming per month currently being sent out live over the Net, this unprecedented move is also building up into an enormous interactive archive. Visitors to the site can access

GO TO:



Wicked Styles

www.wickedstyles.com/

Hi-top culture has never been known for its humility, and this site is no exception. Claiming to be "The world's ultimate information resource for turntable musicians and battle DJs," the site was set up in 1995. Believe the hype. An impressive resource and a Hi-top obsessive's dream, Wicked Styles is clearly a labour of love for its creator, Doc Rice. The site reviews and previews turntable battles, showcases the latest DJ equipment and also runs archived lists of essential obscure scratch albums and turntablist videos. Opposing the commercialised rap industry with state-of-the-art scratchers, they aim to encourage the use of turntables as instruments. The site also carries a Q&A with that dopest of scratchers, Q-Bert, from the liveball Scratch Pkixi collective.



Frog Peak Music

www.frogpeak.org/

Frog Peak Music is a composers collective based in lovely New Hampshire, USA. Their site may not feature the most cutting-edge design, but it does sell an amazing array of impossibly obscure recordings and publications. Here you'll find writings by electronic composer Kenneth Gufuin (see Soundcheck, page 52), all manner of books, pamphlets, papers and scores by or relating to the likes of Robert Ashley and Philip Corner, a set of fonts designed by Dick Higgins (of Fluxus fame), HPM5, software (Hierarchical Music Specification Language) as well as enough recordings to satisfy all your esoteric/musical composition needs.

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Let It Blurt: The Life And Times Of Lester Bangs

By Jim DeRogatis
BLOOMSBURY PARK, VA

Lester Conway Bangs may not have been the grizzled rock writer of all time (arguably his buddy Richard Meltzer was more formally inventive and much more capable of calling a crock a crock), but he's certainly the most widely eulogized in the decade before his untimely death in 1982 at the age of 33. He invented a style of writing about rock, jazz and noise which became the blueprint for today's thinking music journalist. He was the first writer to consciously articulate the common aesthetic ground that free jazz, blues, primitive garage, NYC art rock and punk all shared, and had demolished all that old low/high art argument well before academics were

scratching their beards over Dylan vs. Keats. Most of all, though, his writing was all about himself. In the context of record reviews and head-to-heads with his musical heroes, he worked through his personal neuroses, his self-destructive drugging and bawling, his troubles with women (even the problems he had with his neighbors). Most famously, he was Lou Reed's spinning partner of choice (engaging in all-night tit-for-tats over who knew more about barbiturates or whether *Plastic Machine Music* was indeed, as Bangs claimed, "The Greatest Album Ever Made"). Reed is even quoted on the cover blurb: "His fat and he's got a moustache. I wouldn't spit in Lester's nose." The kind of heartwarming tributes we've come to love him for.

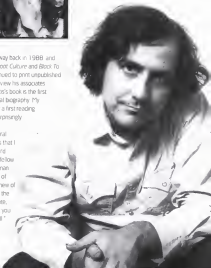
There's been a lot of posthumous action from the Bangs camp. Greil Marcus edited the anthology of his work, *Psychotic Reactions And*

Corbustor Dung way back in 1988, and magazines like *Throut Culture* and *Black To Comm* have continued to print unpublished pieces and to interview his associates. However, DeRogatis's book is the first attempt at an actual biography. "My initial feelings after a first reading was that there's surprisingly little in the way of anecdotes or general biographical details that I hadn't actually heard before. Indeed, as fellow rock critic Billy Altman wrote in the eulogy of Bangs, 'If all you knew of Lester Bangs were the antics that he wrote, I'd have to say that you knew him quite well.'"

That's the problem with someone who shows so much on the details of his real life in his art: it's all there on the page already. DeRogatis tackles this by making the case that Bangs was a composite of many different personalities, and he sets out to synthesize all of these characters into one.

As a writer, DeRogatis doesn't immediately seem like the ideal Bangs biographer. His previous book, *Knolediscipline Eyes: Psychodelic Rock From The Sixties To The Nineties*, was a square retread of the usual suspects, and his writing has none of Bangs's fire and flame. When he does try to move into Bangs mode, he sounds hopelessly self-conscious, as in his embarrassing attempt at an iconoclastic opening gambit: "Sometimes Lester was full of shit." Then again, the book is not about DeRogatis, and despite his occasionally dry tone it does come to life when he quotes the likes of Richard Meltzer or Nick Tosches (indeed, Tosches is particularly good at diagnosing what contributed to Lester's eventual headfirst fall: "he was a romantic in the gravest, saddest, best and most ridiculous sense of that worn-out word." He explains: "he couldn't merely go to bed with a woman, he had to fall in love with her. He couldn't merely dislike something, he had to rail and rage against it. None of it was real, but in the end the shanties of all that crazy love and

Incorable romantic Lester Bangs



Bangs hangs: with Patti Smith and Lou Reed



anger, since they weren't his to command conquered him.

At times, Bangs comes over as the eternal adolescent—going without bathing for days, squatting among piles of comics, books and records and staving up for days—but DeRogatis is careful not to write off all of this person and his life as merely a refusal to grow up. Tosses is right: Bangs truly believed in abdicating, in the possibility of actually changing and affecting the world, and it's the spirit that comes through in his most poetic pieces as well as in the gleeful details of his life. Like stories of him sleeping with headphones on, blasting Little Richard so loud that Tosses was awoken in the next room, or the one about a fire in his block where he chose to save his copy of *P.L.S. Metal Box* over any of his other belongings.

Near the end, Bangs did make an effort to clean himself up, swearing off drugs and booze no longer sweating through each day like it was going to be his, even contemplating never writing about rock music again. In his afterward, DeRogatis points to the examples of Patti and Tosses as ways that Lester could have adapted and survived Tosses' living alone in Manhattan writing fiction and biographies, of the likes of Dean Haman and Melvin out in Portland, writing great hokey novels like *The Night (Alone)* and rarely ever touching on rock again.

Either way we'll never know. He died on Friday 30 April 1982, after listening to *Dave by the Human League* (not listed by the corner as a contributory factor) probably as the result of an accidental overdose of Darvon and Valium. DeRogatis makes a strong case for his premature death being one of the main reasons that he's been embraced by professional critics like Greg Marcus and Robert Christgau, whereas Patti and Tosses have been virtually written out of history. As he says, there was "no risk of him puking on the carpet."

As well as being a tribute to the life-energies and art of Bangs, *Let It Burn* reads very much like a celebration of rock writings

one and only, great gig, a doable time when the writing was as much of a forum for naked self-expression as the music it dealt with. Rock writing today is dominated by careerist hacks and jibbing journalists, but back then, before the music scene became just another monstrous arm of the entertainment business, it seemed like anything was possible. As DeRogatis sees it, "Many of the guys who invoke his name do so as a deterrence machine against charges that their own work is academic, cynical, impetuous and oh-so-politically correct. They are the anti-Lesters: intense emotionalism is not a valid criterion for judging music," Christgau told Lester, but for him it was always the primary one."

Many of Bangs's predictions came true: the current cross-pollination between free jazz and underground rock would have been a joy to him (*Sonic Youth* would have been his dream group) and he clearly foresaw the increasing marginalization of anything that isn't debombing entertainment as an inevitable by-product of the increase in global media and the great power of the music business. DeRogatis throws in a great quote from New Yorker film critic David Denby: "Corporate irony not only isolates the thing that it is selling, but the very act of selling it. In the process it disarms critics by making anyone who goes against the flow of commerce seem daft."

Ultimately *Let It Burn* is a stunning success. It rescues Bangs from the one-dimensional, stopeid, gonzo fuck-up caricature that still persists, and portrays a man in love with art and life and literally dying to get it across. Richard Meltzer inevitably puts it best: "When I wrote somewhere that one of the things that helped kill Lester [Bangs] was WRITING [of music and Christgau] accused me of romanticism. How can writing kill?," they questioned. Well, guys, it doesn't always kill, but it certainly comes closest when you're doing it right. Only when it makes active use of your blood, your heart, your nerves, glands, sex fluids, vertebrae and what all, and don't forget your stink in a word, your body (it's yours) your life."

DAVID KIRMAN

Ornette Coleman: His Life And Music

Peter Nardas Wilson

ROBERT KELLY, JEFFREY M. GORDON

With Barry McKelvey and John Llewellyn's previous works on Ornette Coleman both out of print (though the latter still seems fairly readily available), the new book by German musicologist Peter Nardas Wilson is the only available work on one of the 20th century's most important musical iconoclasts. Which, to put it bluntly, makes it all the more of a pity that it is not a more satisfying read.

Wilson already has tomes about Charlie Parker, Albert Ayler and Anthony Braxton to his credit, so his knowledge of jazz history is not in doubt. Nor is his grasp of theory, as the 25 pages he devotes to a musicological analysis of hermeneutics, complete with numerous annotated examples, provide as succinct and illuminating discussion of Ornette's frustratingly slippery system as has yet appeared. Rather, it's the dullness of his prose (though in Wilson's defense, the book has been translated from German in a workmanlike fashion) and the structure of the book itself that are the major sticking points.

In attempting to deal in a mere 70 pages with the complexities, both biographical and philosophical, of a musical career that has now lasted more than 50 years, Wilson bites off far more than he can chew. The musical analyses that pepper the text are lame in themselves, particularly on the multiple contrabass in Ornette's oeuvre. "Wilson, a bassist himself," also shines on the role of his bassists, particularly Charlie Haden in the music. However, the narrative is a frustrating pastiche of interview quotations from the existing sources, with little attempt to contextualize Ornette's importance and none of the anecdotal dividends that Llewellyn's sustained detective work provided. Little sense of Ornette as a person is communicated, and more wistfully the infectious fire and joy of

the music is buried beneath the turgid prose rhythms of an undergraduate essay.

Furthermore for readers best known to himself and his publisher, Wilson has decided to devote more than half of the text to a discography, with two pages devoted to each release. These mini-reviews are neither concise enough to provide a quick opinion for easy reference, nor lengthy enough to allow a sufficiently detailed discussion of the music. While the discography is virtually complete—including a selection of bootlegs and such oddities as Ornette's vocal appearance on Louis Armstrong's 1970—the format is as strange one and, given the ready availability of updatable discographies on the Web, an exercise in redundancy.

Unfortunately, neither the useful bibliography nor the dull foreword by Pat Metheny can save the reader from disappointment. Wilson obviously has a real love and grasp of the sweep of the music, but in producing a book that is only recommendable to the complete Ornette neophyte or to the casual fan (if such people even exist)—an opportunity has been missed.

ALAN CUMMINGS

Stopping Time: Paul Bley And The Transformation Of Jazz

By Paul Bley with David Lee

VICARIES PRESS \$17.95

Paul Bley is one of the most thoughtful and reflective contemporary pianists, so it's little surprise that he turns out to be a highly articulate thinker about the practice of improvisation. This short and very readable book, written in collaboration with *Coda* journalist David Lee, is an autobiography, but the title explores its main focus: it relates the pianist's struggle to develop a sense of freedom beyond bebop. However, it was while playing with Charlie Parker that he learned one of the most important lessons for any improviser: "You never play where you are, you play where you're going." Bley has developed this lesson to a high art. "Now I've gotten to the point where I can hear a whole solo in advance—not note for note, but structurally. He listens for three things before he plays a phrase. 'One. What was the last phrase that was played and what was the last note of the last phrase that was played, and what should follow that?' Two. What music has been played throughout the history of jazz that has to be avoided, leaving me only what's left as material for the next phrase? Three. Where would I like to get to by the time my playing is finished?" High standards indeed.

But he came to realize that jazz is of the sort of work was premised on redundancy. "If a score was going to give you two minutes of written music in a 15 minute performance why bother? Especially if it was two minutes of written music that was historically full of repetition." The appearance of Ornette



Ornette Coleman



Coleman and Don Cherry, invited to sit in at Blei when he was working at the Hillcrest Club in Los Angeles in 1958, showed him the way out of the "betwixt wilderness." In a single gesture, all the constraints of repetitive gesture fell away. "The fact that he has never been a lover of chords was helpful in approaching the new, linear music." "I always thought that a chord was a vertical melody played simultaneously." But at the end of the book Blei gives a further clue: To harmonize with musicians who are playing "microtonally," as he puts it, is not using the tempered scale found on the piano. "You do that with overtones. The whole business of letting things sustain suggested a whole new way of playing the piano." But there's still a paradox because although Blei demolishes the idea of standards, he continues to play them — though the book doesn't mention one of the seminal albums in the genre, *My Standards* on Steeplechase.

Blei has much of interest to say about Ornette Coleman's approach to music. One comment caught my attention concerning the balance of Coleman's groundbreaking Atlantic recordings. Although the prominence of alto sax has been remarked on, Blei thinks it was still flattened out. "The sound of the band was also way on top. Blei was a key figure in the post-Ornette revolution in jazz, and he talks about his work in the Jazz Composers Guild with Cecil Taylor, Bill Dixon, Roswell Rudd, Archie Shepp, Sun Ra and others. What's less well-known is his pioneering work with synthesizers in the late 60s and early 70s, and his involvement in video and installation art with his partner Carol Goss. In 1969 Blei managed to get an early synthesizer from his inventor, Bob Moog, and there were teething troubles. "There was no instruction manual." He explains the joys and travails of touring and recording with the instrument, but a few years later he returned to acoustic piano because there was hardly anyone left playing it.

There are some hilarious anecdotes. A gig for ten Thelma School players plus ukulele how Lucille Ball literally saved his life: "the ECM period when he was working at being

the slowest piano to play in the room." Jimmy Buffett's troubles with *the* *U.S. Navy*. Blei comes across as a clever, thoughtful and somewhat caustic, totally unimpaired to his art. For anyone interested in what makes a great improvising musician, this book is essential reading.

ANDY HAMILTON

Noise Water Meat: A History Of Sound In The Arts

By Dorteleg Kahn
FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX

Despite its subtitle, *Noise Water Meat* is a thorough lecture in a history of sound in the arts. If that's what it really trying to be, it's primarily a history of the modernist avant-garde up to the end of the 1950s. As such, it reflects a period where, with the evolution of cinema sound art had yet to become distinguishable from music, and still awaited release from the fourth dimension into the first three.

It's difficult at times not to become impatient with a book that, for example, considers John Cage's water music to be more interesting than say, that of Andrew Lloyd Webber, or for which the boundaries of a discussion on "impossible music" sounds are essentially limited to Cage's early years. Kahn, a professor of media arts in Australia, acts here primarily as a historian, so his focus on dead white males is perhaps inevitable.

Nonetheless, the whole book is tremendously relevant to more recent developments, and it's regrettable that connections with the last few decades are never really made.

There's one other obstacle to negotiate: Kahn's fellow academics may well feel that his prose is "difficult to read," but I imagine that most readers will find his ongoing desire to break the three-digit word count in his sentences more of a turn-off. One day we can hope: postmodernists, post-structuralists and all the other cultural studies post-positives will sum up the energy to actually learn how to write in an accessible, intelligible way

in the meantime. Kahn's prose remains unnecessarily obscure.

The book's limitations are unfortunate because *Noise Water Meat* is a provocative, enlightening and expansive foray into an arena that demands better from many writers than have previously offered. He dips into cracks that others often paper over: steps beyond the clichés of avant-garde history, and offers plenty that should leave the attentive reader with a veritable banquet for thought.

Kahn's central idea is the need to approach modernism as a listener, not as reader or viewer. Whether discussing Luigi Russolo, William Burroughs or Antonin Artaud, he focuses attention throughout on sound and aurality, bringing to the fore aspects of their writings that are sometimes surprisingly ignored. As he says, "Modernism has been read and looked at in details but rarely heard."

More significantly, he has an ear for issues to which others often pretend deafness. Writing about Russolo, the often-cited forerunner of everything that is noisy in modern music, he homes in on the Futurist's infatuation with the spectacular sounds of the ordnance of the First World War, and consistent avoidance of the sounds of pain, death or any human effort are brought to the fore in Kahn's recounting of the birth of noise music. His keen historical eye also highlights neglected figures such as the French composer Carlo-Béard, who used motors, sirens, and electric bells in the pre-Russolo *Symphonie Of Mechanical Forces* (1908).

Kahn sidesteps the less exciting noise theoreticians in favour of a psychosocially approach. Noise as a presence in Jack Kerouac's writing posits for space, atrophy, Dadaist brutality, Russolo's busy decorations of war noise are sharply contrasted against the horrific sounds of death recounted in Emily Maria Remarque's *All Quiet On The Western Front*. Kahn goes on to trace the line in all its forms as boundary between signal and noise as the agent of scientific revolution which acts to abate noise, and as the medium through which phonography inscribes the world. For Russolo, Edgar Varèse or Percy Grainger, the line was the glimmers an attempt to break free of intervallic melody in favour of the infinite parameters of nature.

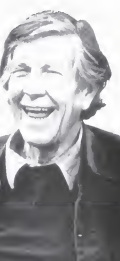
Elsewhere, Kahn discusses or lingers synaesthesia, the phonographic revolution and the remarkable resistance of the avant-garde to intimate sound. Music's concrete pioneer Pierre Schaeffer preferred

abstraction and only film animators such as Disney or innovators such as Eisenstein produced sound art that escaped music's oppressive paradigm. A particularly good chapter on John Cage's adoption of silence as a motif or emblem sheds welcome light on the American composer's fantasies of winning society, of putting a stop to social noise, of silencing the performer.

Cage is, inevitably, a central figure in the book. The central third of *Noise Water Meat* is a lengthy investigation of an increasing fluidity in the postwar avant-garde, made evident through the obscure tropes of the likes of George Brecht's *Drop Event*. Kahn homes in on the perceived gulf between Cage's godless objectivity and Jackson Pollock's intuitive expressionism. Kahn argues against this often observed viewpoint by citing instead the things the two artists had in common: an art as performance, instant, environmental immersion, the indeterminate results of chance operations. If at times Kahn's central arguments can be reduced to matters of trivial academic debate (always a hazard in the field of Cage studies in particular), the level of historical detail he amasses remains fascinating. His scope is also wide-ranging, bringing in a whole cross of poets, painters and musicians to illustrate every theme.

Kahn sets up Cage's *Water Music* and Pollock's painting as key moments where aqueous flux replaced mere watery undercurrents in the modernist story. Even his introduction to this, a multi-disciplinary polytextualized swim through the work of Henry Cowell, Raymond Roussel, Aldous Huxley

Silent laughter: John Cage



Angie Breton and others offers a prompt off point for a possible dozen further books. The CagePollock section is also every bit as illuminating about their contemporaries Allan Kaprow and George Brecht, two of the major contributors to happenings and Fluxus, as it is about the two principals.

The final section of the book deals with most voices: the presence of vital strains in the voices of William Burroughs and the voice screen in Arnon Anau; Michael McClure and others. Although similar concerns have been traced elsewhere, any discussion of Anau's theatre, the Sociological engram of Wilhelm Reich's organ he takes on strange shapes when the sound of the voice is placed firmly in the foreground.

It is difficult to briefly summarise the scope of Kahn's achievement. His chapters are filled with digressions, unusual juxtapositions and unexpected inclusions. Le Monde Youss is discussed alongside excerpts from David Wilde's *The Picture Of Dorian Gray*, while the sound of Rammstein in the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer provides a frame for Konstantin Raevsky's experiments in recording the absent voices of the dead. Kahn evident, has a taste for contradicting received wisdom but his willingness to hear his subjects from unconventional positions is ultimately more rewarding. Perhaps it's unfair to ask the book to live up to its title. *How We Hear* is a compendium rather than an encyclopedia, a prodigal's feast of assaults and riddles. It is often obscure and seemingly irrelevant. It is also refreshing and thought provoking. All we need now is for someone to repeat the exercise with this still-living sound artist.

BRIAN DUGUID

Super Scratch: Lee 'Scratch' Perry, The Almost Complete Album Discography

by Gary Stermos
SECRET HISTORY (SON-4486)

It's a jungle out there, or we need help. San Francisco-based Lee Perry (born Gary Stermos) has self-published a handy tool for outsiders keen to pick their way through the thickets of the reggae Scratch's back catalogue. Not only is Perry's recordings numerous, but the flood of releases in recent years means that there are many new listening companions. Particulars of the early material, to make matters worse, some of the masters have been remixed and otherwise tampered with. What's more, a significant portion of albums purporting to be by Perry are forgeries and contain no Scratch input whatsoever.

To make it easy on himself, Stermos sensibly hasn't even attempted to keep track of T singles. The discography begins with The Upsetter album of 1969 and proceeds chronologically, listing nearly all Perry albums, by date of issue (not all of the many



Scratch power: Lee Perry in the Ark

of them). The book is divided into three sections: 'The Almost Complete Album Discography', 'The Almost Complete Single Discography', and 'The Almost Complete EP Discography'. Each section lists the title, year, and label of the release. The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the work of Lee Perry and the reggae scene of the 1960s and 1970s.

reggae) recorded by Perry, including the 1969 album *The Upsetter*, the 1970 album *The Harder They Come*, and the 1971 album *The Black and White Album*. The book also includes a section on Perry's collaborations with other reggae artists, such as Bob Marley and the Wailers. The book is a comprehensive guide to Perry's discography and is a must-read for anyone interested in reggae music.

The book is divided into three sections: 'The Almost Complete Album Discography', 'The Almost Complete Single Discography', and 'The Almost Complete EP Discography'. Each section lists the title, year, and label of the release. The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the work of Lee Perry and the reggae scene of the 1960s and 1970s.

WILL PHILLIPS

Arcaea: Musicians On Music

Edited by John Zorn
LIMARIE BOOKS, FEB \$24.95

Accounts of the contemporary are too often bloodless retrospectives, purporting to be where the action is, while actually reporting on what remains after the dust has settled. John Zorn, as practitioner, editor, and now editor in the thick of what is unfolding in New York and Arcaea, is offered as part of his ongoing physical activity in America rather than as a passive mirror reflections. Zorn, with his wit and wit, is a unique voice in the contemporary music scene. He is a composer, a performer, and a writer. His work is a blend of different styles and genres, and he is always pushing the boundaries of what is possible in music.

The book's urbane and provocative penultimate chapter, "Against Radical Contingency," quoted Stephen Drury, taking issue with Pierre Bourdieu, argues against analysis that seeks to gain down "class membership through cultural choices." He calls instead for a criterion which will not only affirm what is good, but will actually clarify the

nature of personal aesthetic experience. Such elucidation follows in John Schott's concluding analytical notes on form and harmony in John Corbano's work. Schott's reawakening account shows how the saxophone's special intimacy arose from his search for unity "amid the runs of tradition." Other essays in Arcaea point to tradition as a necessary preliminary to the reappraisal of relevance. Organist Anthony Coleman observes that Theodosius Monk "didn't exist only to create but also to destroy. Or at least to... to mess this sort of it into everything." Accorded Guy Kluweck, simply amidst his piece "Miami, That Tune!" Gustaf Scott Johnson assumes a role for "genre definitions" on the grounds that they "create feedback loops with the real world," but he adds that "their proper use requires flexibility and occasional vandalism."

Music-making's continuity with other aspects of daily experience is a recurrent topic. David Shea, discussing his recombinant techniques, insists that "the development of my compositional methods never has been based on musical questions alone." Individual works are always pointing to "external references." The notion of self-contained, self-perpetuating tradition governed by an internal logic is rejected unequivocally. The world has to be let in, whether in the form of the architecture which nurtured Myra Melford's piano playing the cooking which parallels like Man's drum-machine manipulations, or Bob Ostertag's impassioned outcry against homophobic violence in his composition *All The Rage*.

Some chapters do focus more narrowly upon refinement of instrumental technique, but as a means to open up new spaces. Discussing how her development of the two-bowed cello precipitated major commissions from composers including Luigi Nono, Jonathan Harvey, Elliott Sharp and György Kurtág, Frances-Marie Ulls to alludes to the process of "the mind inventing the techniques and the techniques re-inventing the mind." Clues to the dynamics of personal development are registered in the technical explorations offered by guitarist Bill Frisell and by bassist Mary Doreas, in Fred Frith's notebook extracts, Gary Hemingway's reminiscences, and Elliott Sharp's history of his group Carbon.

Concern for transmission of insight and sharing of experience is the pulsing heart of this book. However, it is less knowle more strongly than when composer and trombonist George Lewis, writing out of his experience of teaching advanced music within academic contexts, addresses those stultifying limitations which cut the reception of unorthodox ideas and challenging practices. Openness to the musical practices of other cultures is evident in Chris Brown's "Pagan Music," an inquiry into how "musicians with different training and influence figure out how to play with each other." Lee V. Vark writes of the lifelong reward derived from her study of gagaku, Japanese court music. Peter Garland's Australian travelogue articulates his concern for the indigenous cultures of that continent.

PHOTO: ARCAEA BOOKS



Bob Ostertag

and those of America. Koto player Miya Masaoka's elegant "Notes From A Trans-Cultural Diary" permits glimpses of her creative involvement with figures such as composer La Monte Young, Indian musician Ravi Shankar and cello virtuoso Renan de Seron.

Stylistic diversity is crucial to the book's impact. It is flexible enough to accommodate David Michie's provocative responses to questions about "how the composer gets along in the world today" and percussionist Zelig's musings on octatonic tradition in relation to the physiology of the ear. Shrewd juxtaposition generates meaning in the spaces between chapters: John Oswald's frank and direct discussion of plunderphonic, is followed by John Zorn's oblique and disjunctive "Treatment For A Film In Fifteen Scenes." David Rosenboom's "Prepositional Music," an earnest and eloquent exposition of the need for "cognitive transformation" as a basis for survival is followed by Marc Albot's colloquial yet in some senses equally serious deliberations on his love for loud noise, distortion and broken voices. Each is illuminating, together they say more. Polemic aside, the 30 chapters of Arcana form an invaluable active archive: a mapping that is also a stimulus to explore.

JULIAN COWLEY

A Rebel In Music: Selected Writings

By Hanns Eisler

GARN & RUBELL, PBC \$38.95

Hanns Eisler pursued a singular course in 20th century music. Born in Leipzig in 1898, his father was a professional philosopher. He grew up in Vienna, was drafted into the Austrian army during World War I, and between 1919 and 1923 studied composition with Arnold Schoenberg. Although he never joined the Communist Party, he was a committed socialist and combined application to 12-tone — then considered the acme of hermetic obscurity and musical terrorism — with conducting workers' choirs. In the late 20s, he was critic for *Der Rote Arbeiter*, the German Communist Party's newspaper, and composed music for the Bertolt Brecht-scripted *Kuhle Wampe*: a

sensitive and gripping film about the problems — political and social — of young working-class communists in Weimar Germany.

After Hitler took power in 1933 Eisler was forced to emigrate. He found the world addressing trade unions and socialist organizations about the role of music in the struggle against fascism — in speeches and articles which form the backbone of this selection. He writes in a pithy, practical style suited to the urgency of the occasion and studied with the confidence, inexact aphorisms that characterise the thriving Marxist culture of Weimar. He has occasional songwriting partner Brecht, Eisler believed in action. He composed fighting songs for the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War. During the second world war, he had a troubled time writing film music for the Hollywood studios. There he met up with Brecht and Theodor Adorno, with whom he wrote a book, *Composing For The Films*. His remarks on film here became the introduction of that volume. Readers familiar with the history of the period will find this collection vivid and engaging. Those interested in musical philosophy will probably prefer his collaboration with Adorno.

After the war ended, he was prosecuted by Senator McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee, which accused him of being the "Karl Marx of Communism in the musical field." Like Brecht, he settled in East Germany after the war, becoming an establishment figure in the Communist regime, but he never lost his sparky and critical character. He died in 1962, honoured for having devoted his life to the cause.

Hanns Eisler never accepted the Stalinist line that 12-tone was bourgeois decadence, a crime against the socialist state. But that didn't mean he deemed music transcendent and supra-social. Like Adorno, he interpreted the harrowing melancholy of 12-tone as a

premonition of Blitz and Holocaust, the crisis and enmity of capitalism emerging in the syntax of its most rigorous and fruitful music ("Schoenberg never left"). Also like Adorno, he despised the academic use of 12-tone as a system for generating song modernism, continually raising awkward questions about social relevance. He espoused formalist dogmatism, insisting that styles appropriate for a film or a "fighting song" could be different from those of experiment or speculation. After the war, Adorno stayed on in the West, developing an ivory-tower, postwar Marxism and attacking Brecht and Eisler for committing themselves to an imperfect realisation of socialism. In return, Eisler accused Adorno and his circle of simply trying to be cleverer than the paid thinkers of the bourgeoisie, rather than lighting them.

By the 1950s, Eisler was a Communist mirror-image of Benjamin Britten: his democratic ethos watered down his music while insistence on musical education as the panacea for a divided society revealed an ineradicable top-down condescension. The problem was not Eisler's Marxism, but the fact that his analysis of world music was not imaginative and materialist (as Marxist) enough. Heavily involved in composing for workers' choirs, he saw himself as a technician of the revolution. In New York in the mid-30s he wrote for *Max Eastman's New Masses*, an agit-prop magazine that hailed Lenin as a social engineer. Such technocratic positivism failed to note that Lenin's greatest political insight was understanding workers' councils, or soviets, as the embryo of a new society, a political form invented by workers themselves. Completely wrapped up in his role as composer of formal music — in opposition to the narcotic of Hollywood and Broadway — Eisler never recognised the world-historical significance of black American music and its

exploration of commercial recording (the acknowledged Duke Ellington's talent, but only to say he was handicapped by making his fortune in nightclubs).

Currently, anti-racist activists in Britain are forcing recognition from the British media that the industrial revolution was completely enmeshed with the slave trade. Far from being an epoch of justice and sanity following a period of barbarism, capitalism was the very motor of history's worst crimes against humanity. This is what Friedrich Engels meant when he said that slavery in the American South was based not on chains and whips, but on the English cotton industry. Seen from this perspective, it is unsurprising that the most exploited victims of capitalism should develop a music — namely blues and jazz and all their extensions — that has such resonance for a world structured and disoriented by the exigencies of capital. The reason Eisler's prescriptions sound so dusty and inappropriate today is that his analyses lacked this long historical view: the reference to Hegel on aesthetics rather than Marx's Capital, where all these historical facts are spelled out.

Eisler wrote bravely about the decay of bourgeois music — and its difference from church and courtly music — but was unable to locate its genuine gravediggers. A Cornelius Cardew before his time, he failed to grasp that the exploited were already coming to grips with their situation and providing solutions. As so often, a communist fellow traveller who never voiced criticism of Stalin — the show trials and assassinations, cynical foreign policy, social repression, religious sexual politics and outright lies — ended up deaf to the creativity of the very class he wished to serve. Eisler was a canny composer and a lively writer, but he never had the analytical or political wit to resist being something of a stooge.

BEN WATSON



Hanns Eisler

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Wire

UK London Royal Festival Hall

Wire's lack of sentimentality towards their back catalogue is exemplified by their treatment of the notorious "L2XU." The song's "punk anthem" status was soon undermined by a perfunctory making at a show at the Electric Belfry in 1980 (which spawned the live album *Document And Eyewitness*), where it was followed by a set of new material and some rather dodgy performance art. An agenda had been set: the group were neither going to be caught within their own shadow nor be obliged to ponder to their audience. By 1990 they had co-opted the song with the mono-chordal monomania of "The Drill" producing the drill variation "In Every City."

This concert, however, was part of the South Bank's Living Legends concert series, and rumours were circulating that Wire's first show in a decade would be a greatest hits set. For a group who have shown a willfulness that has often bordered on perversity (on their 1987 US tour, they were supported by Wire-copysists Ex-Lion Tamers who played *Pink Flay* in its entirety), what could be more perverse? But then again, as their intention from day one was to deconstruct rock 'n' roll, maybe they would see it as appropriate to do the same to their own myth? And so on. Knowing too much about Wire can leave you stranded in a



Practice makes perfect: Wire's Colin Newman



Wire, plus *Ex-Lion Tamers* on *Pink Flay* by *Nathan Clark* (left) and *unwashed 'Pony'*

maze of second-guessing. The surprisingly young audience, many of whom presumably came upon the group via the likes of Blur and Elastica, were no doubt unencumbered by such baggage.

The first piece of entertainment was a screening of some punchy footage from the German TV show *Rockpoolist* from 1978 — a brave move if they were out to match their former glories. From then on the evening unfolded as a celebration of everything Wire — including the solo projects, which have always been a vital adjunct to the group's music. Colin Newman and Moka Sagel, aka *Immerman*, built up vast mutating fields of electronics, with hook-like details that recalled Seefeel, although their ethereality was salted with atonality. Under his *He Said* alias, Graham Lewis has bridged the gap between

exploratory projects with Bruce Gilbert (such as *Dome* and *PCD*) and his songs in Wire Susan Slinger on bass, an anonymous Powerbook manipulator and Lewis himself on guitars playing a short, pithy set, with Lewis's rich voice dominating the variegated backdrop. His love of relocating clichés and quaint figures of speech was exemplified by a final piece that turned into a white noise rant as he comically shouted out: "You really talk the breeze!"

These intriguing cameos set the scene for D.S. Daniel Miller and Seth Hodder, who constructed a collage of Wire sounds from their 35+ years, which they slowly mutated through a Rosh-lap process. But whether the Royal Festival Hall is the best venue for this kind of set is a moot point. More video entertainment came from a late 80s American TV clip with Lewis, it has to be said, sporting a shocking mustache haircut complete with loonnie bawooner. A political party was projected on the screen, and one of the audience boxes was spotted to pick out a fairly dignified droid in white military garb, who gestured to the audience as Wire came on.

Wire members, solo ventures have often been so experimental, so non-rock, that it makes you wonder how they see their own legacy — as kids' stuff versus the real deal perhaps? But from the introductory snare hit of a revamped "Pink Flag" it came as a shock to see the four stark figures 20-odd years down the line, playing their ragged but essentially better music with the same tenor

Highlights of the second half were the minute long mini-drama "Another Thing" and a ferocious version of "Mercy", both from *Chairs Moving*. After an initial encore of "Two People in a Room", the pay-off was inevitable: "I 200". There were a few fuffs for grumble after so long a layoff — but Wire played Wire with intent. Lewis clenching both fists in affirmation as the group left the stage. Whether or not this current state of activity is an act of closure is uncertain. Wire haven't let on, although there were two new songs, and tonight and their live itinerary keeps on growing. As Colin Newman sang on "A Sensus Of Snakes": "There's a story in me. It starts out out out out out." Watch this space.

PIKE BARNES

Karlheinz Stockhausen UK London Royal Festival Hall

A Wire colleague remarked that the promise to be "a real Radio 3 event". True to form, this odd mixture of several of the groundbreaking *Klavierstücke* (solo piano pieces) coupled with orchestral masterwork Gruppen (Gruppen: the latter performed by three divisions of The BBC Symphony Orchestra with Stockhausen himself present, was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 as part of a series of three Composer Portraits (the others were Beethoven and Handel). But we should value public service broadcasting and patronage while it still lasts. From the late 50s, whatever else you say

new venues for the new music, reminding us that despite a possible decline of inspiration in recent years, Stockhausen remains a totally committed avant gardist. It was a moving vision, yet perhaps one from a lost era, delivered by a man in a baggy adolescent orange pullover.

Almost from the beginning, Stockhausen's major preoccupation has been to change the nature of concert hall sound listening. This was the theme of his talk, which was placed between the two performances of Gruppen. The aim of the repertoire was to provide a degree of familiarity in this rarely performed work. He described Gruppen as the first example of "spatial music" and reiterated his demand in Robert Rietman's *Stockhausen On Music*: "The element of theatrical polyphony is important in my works, and the new halls should be designed for it." Concert halls should have movable seating and offer continuous musical programmes. Gruppen doesn't have the theatricality of *Spielraum* where musicians wander among the audience, but its vivid illusion of sounds moving through space was totally compelling in The BBCSO's performances.

Gruppen occupies a special place in the history of the post-war avant garde. It was premiered in 1958, with its three small orchestras surrounding the audience and conducted by Boulez, Maderna and the composer himself. Here the three conductors were Martin Brabbins, David Robertson and Pascal Rophé. Its pitch and rhythmic structures are interdependent, though I don't dare anyone to hear this in performance. Stockhausen constructed a logarithmic scale for the rhythm, so that a change from short notes to long, for instance, results a downward shift of two octaves. The point is that to achieve a harmony of rhythm, different tempos must be maintained simultaneously — hence the need for three orchestras.

It's the spectacle, the theatrical polyphony that materialises the work's theoretical basis and this is what gripped the sell-out RFFH audience. Each orchestra has a large complement of percussion and the orchestral effects are kaleidoscopic. At the climax of the piece a brass chord is thrown from one orchestra to another across the audience. Stockhausen commented on the "moored" sensation of three orchestras at the Festival Hall — two were in the wings but still close to the main stage — but it was still thrilling listening.

What could be regarded as the grinner part of the programme — certainly that was how my loggily-hired staff blissfully unaware that Gruppen was going to be performed twice, regarded it — were the solo *Klavierstücke* Numbers 1-4, VI, VII, XIV and XI were performed at the start of the programme by Ellen Corber, Nicolas Hoesjes playing the longer IX in the second half. After XI, Stockhausen wrote no further pieces for 20 years, XIV, from *Monopis*, is one of a series from each of the operas of the unaltered *Licht cycle*, and it's a much more playful though less intense

The future is orange: Stockhausen



experience than the other pieces. In an acoustic surprise-good for solo piano the virtuosity of the soloist in creating the subtle shadings and techniques Stockhausen calls for was fully apparent. Repeats of these pieces would have been justified too.

ANDY HAMILTON

Tim Berne's Big Satan UK London Vortex

Saxophonist Tim Berne's music has never fitted anywhere comfortably. A student of the under-acknowledged and late Julius Hemphill, he falls into that amorphous area of the jazz vanguard that is neither free improvisation nor (reborn) free jazz. He has an abiding interest in writing pieces that provide frames for improvisation — freedom has only ever been half the story. His pieces typically move through a succession of moods which are sharply marked but broad enough to offer plenty of latitude to the performers. He gives off a feeling of resolution and direction after his long, arduous scenes carved from some, so deliberate is he in pursuing the idea at hand.

Berne began releasing his work on his own Empire label more than 20 years ago and returned fairly recently to self-publishing with the New-Orleans Sweeney label which has evidently been a shot in the arm. For the Vortex concert he was with his Big Satan trio, featuring long term cohort Marc Ducret on guitar and Tom Raney on drums. While this group offers some scope for exploring arrangements than his other groups, Bloodcount and Cass Tottle, it's a little lightened set-up which allows for quick collective interplay.

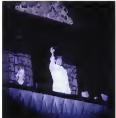
Ducret has been recording with Berne for almost ten years and the closeness of their



aggression that hallmarked their earliest incarnation. There's a rare chemistry, and they work deviously relishing its rawness.

Wire managed to inject nostalgia in the same way that they have always sounded essentially out of time. This was a vital reassurance of their past rather than a fuzzy museum piece dusted off for the modern age. They injected new life into "40 Versions", and although "The Boiling Bay" began on the same svelte path as the recorded version, the guitars became increasingly brutal after they had meditated awhile on the riff.

If you have to have stage invaders, then Michael Clark is as good as any. That said, his new piece — performed during an extended version of "Heartbeat" — came across as dislocated, his three dancers' choreography bound by the limited space onstage.



about if the BBC Third Programme (Radio 3's precursor) helped to lift British live-in concert music from banal pastoral backwardness into the modern era. Listeners had puffed at conductor Sir Thomas Beecham's witty remark when asked if he'd heard any Stockhausen — "No, but I believe I've freedom in some" — now they had to suffer Stockhausen, Ligeti and worse outrages. However, during the last decade the BBC has only presented one Stockhausen piece, namely *Julius 1990*.

"High modernism" as it's now often called, is the modernism which from the 60s onwards has had to define itself in opposition to postmodern fragmentation. At 72 Stockhausen remains, with Pierre Boulez, its leading representative. In his talk during the concert, he made an impressionist plea for



Tim Berne with Ben Ducter (below left) and Tom Rainey



PHOTOS: CULTUREMET

musical relationship was apparent at the gig. Finding space in and around Berne's searching also and baritone lines, the guitarist moved from dissonant chord chops through hazy zones controlled by his volume pedal to percussive hammer-ons. He also composed several of the night's pieces. Central to this trio's peculiar sound is the percussion of Tom Rainey who struck a balance between eloquent, funky clumpers and lightning-quick changes of pace. He also ditched his sticks on a couple of occasions to supply some highly expressive and nuanced hands-on percussion.

Berne ended the evening saying that if we wanted to hear the trio properly we should buy the CD — he'd been too tired to do his music full justice. It certainly didn't sound that

way. His slowing on odd into an irrational, absurdly sharp witted, hiding snarling conversationalist with Rainey and Ducter while never relinquishing a sense of the big picture he was sketching. He can move effortlessly from a controlled Henry Threadgill-like rasp to breathy delicacy. Big Satan make very different music to Rauli Miettinen's guitarists/drum group say, but the outfits share a sense of musical rapport and clarity of purpose. Big Satan's music happily wanders across genres with no loss of focus. The trio shift smoothly between pressure cooker intensity, knife-edge dialogues and the kind of slow paced abstract melancholy that's never far away when Berne's on the bandstand.

WILL MONAGHERY

Phase Of Post Music Japan: Tokyo ICC

"What is happening to music?", ask the programme notes to this minimalist-electronica night at Tokyo's high-tech ICC Centre. Questions about the future of music hang in the air at such events: will it be faster, slower, longer, shorter, busier, sparser? Machine driven or a return to song? Composed or left to chance? Commercial or whimsical. Western or Eastern? Modern or postmodern, modern or post-modern? Live or unlive? Will the real experiments take place in pop music, or at the 'outlying edge'? Will it become smoky background to films and video games? Will it all implode with a return to storytelling? Are we killing stories now? Does it really matter?

At this particular time on the future, Powerbooks, turntables, kitchen utensils, CD players and various processors were in, 'real' instruments (even keyboards) were out. Computer programs and digital synthesis were the modus operandi, playing something in the traditional sense was irrelevant. So nothing startlingly new here this has been a gradual process since Schaeffer, Stockhausen, Ligeti et al. Different means but a similar end, and not restricted to 'highflow' composing either. Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music*, Tangerine Dream's *Zet*, Eric's *Discrete Music*, Carl Stone, Oval, Heller Trio, even Whitehouse have been pushing the sound envelope in a various, non-musical directions. Would ICC's take — tied in with their Sound Art exhibition — offer any radical new cues?

The opening double act was billed as Dismorphism and the label Ash International (RI), otherwise known as Joe Banks and Mike Harding of Touch respectively. Banks is best known for his R&B recordings of electrical and magnetic sounds, National Grid sound installations and the like. In concert, Banks presented and processed these and other sounds including, bizarrely, some Evan Parker, so that the air became thick with sound — formless shifting and rattling the hell out of the ceiling. On a large screen images of huge concrete receiving dishes, stuning reduction on the Kiri coat, stared back at us — dead data.

Saturday night was laptop night. For all sorts of reasons, the branch of modern music is becoming less about performance and spectacle. Rock has forsaken the wordrobe, pop has become a series of PDA with a few dance moves and DJ culture has turned unadorned and sleek. Heri Behind Tables into icons. In many ways this is a no bad thing — the music's all that matters — but it sure makes it boring to look at. The enigmatically named former Tene Thaumatz collaborator Jane Dove — who cuts herself as mole at this rare personal appearance — was a case in point: a man tapping into a laptop, no vocals, no real attempt at communicating with an audience. Dove's abstract digital shorts of sound slithered around in a darkened room, mildly

interesting to a point, but essentially out of reach and out of touch.

Frenchman Christophe Charles, who's worked with Oval's Markus Popp and is currently lecturing at Japan's Chukyo University, at least chose to sit in the audience, operating his laptop from a small table three rows from the front. It was as much visual as aural, as he've stared openly at a large screen seemed into graphic interpretations of each of the program's sequencing tracks. A welcome distraction initially, but gradually you couldn't help but wonder: so what? In any case it did little to add to a collage of sounds that was essentially uninteresting.

Surely star attraction Tene Thaumatz would save the day? As yet more people tried to squeeze into ICC's 200 capacity performance space, Thaumatz gave his usual gender-



Philip Jack



Tene Thaumatz

tonding rhetoric as introduction which at least established some sort of performer-audience relationship, but then it was back to the one man and a laptop (or in this case, two laptops) digital doodling. Call me a Ludite, but Thaumatz's digital excursions left me cold. I wanted to like it. I wanted to see the oneness of his sonic and sociopolitical threatening. I wanted to tag along to the club event he was doing after the show with Susumu Yokota, but sadly I didn't get it.

The final night saw a return to, if not, earthiness, then at least a dash of analogue and even a degree of warmth. Pol Mathlow, a Belgian/German who grew up in Spain and USA and now lives in Tokyo, used any identity crisis he might have to good effect. Mathlow or

Orange Head as he is sometimes known actually had what could loosely be described as a 'group' with him, and together they coaxed some half-decent sounds from turntables, an old EMS synthesizer and even a food mixer! At one point, the sound of chopping vegetables was only upstaged by the processed cacophony of bringing them to the boil. Similarly, mouthwatering was the prospect of ex-DNA member Rue Mon on three customised drum machines, but although improvised, the results seemed somewhat clinical and one-dimensional. Should we expect anything less from a drum solo?

Thank goodness, then, for Phil Jick with his battered vinyl and ancient record players (too old and too removed from DJ culture to be called turntables). What made Jick's set different from what had gone before? For a start, there was an angled camera trained behind him simultaneously transmitting images onto the large screen so we could actually see what his hands were doing. Then there was the source material: carefully selected dusty vinyl, each with its own crackle history, tension and dare I say it, emotion. And finally there was the interface between these little bundles of personality and Jick's manipulation of them via loops and reverb. Simple — and easily the best set of the series.

So after three nights of, respectively, ether processing, digital synthesis and the manipulation of reedynudes, are we any closer to determining future trends in music making? What is happening to music? At the risk of oversimplifying and being shot down in flames... not much?

DAVID ELLIOTT

What Is Music? Festival Australia Melbourne Revolver & Sydney Palladium

From humble rock/hip-hop beginnings five years ago, Australia's What Is Music? festival (held annually in Melbourne and Sydney) has grown and diversified to such an extent that crowds are now considered significant and media exposure is strong. The participants came from many strands of today's broad experimental field, each tackling alternate issues and styles with individual meals of communication and musical language. Included in this year's line-up were such diverse acts as Pimmon (computer processing), The Kier (micro-electronic), Menstruation Sakers (prehistoric punk), DJ Dexter (DMC champ), Owen Ambarch (electronic/guitar), Lines International (improvised all-stars), and many more local and international acts.

On the opening night, the New Zealand based Sigma Editions collective — Ross Parlino, Phil and David Haines — were crammed into a 30 minute set. They overcame their time limitations by blending the three acts into each other, which resulted in a sublime flow of micro loops, misty atmospheres, rising minimalism and

fractured dynamics.

Dworzec was a Melbourne based four piece currently cropped to three members. Guitar, synth and accordion made up the instrumentation, but it was often difficult to tag sounds down to a single instrument or player. Comprising layers of free noise, this was, however, never noisy — the rest of each player toward their chosen instrument was notable. Accordion Lou took this important literally often allowing it to fall loosely and let the sounds make their own way out.

Numerous laptops were spotted throughout the eight nights — I have never seen one at any Australian festival prior to this. The approach to this latest tool of endless possibilities was indeed unsure for most performers in both the emerging sounds and how they dealt with the 'not much to look at' factor. Simon Wickham-Smith took the most extreme approach at each of his shows. In Melbourne the trusty laptop sat on display while Wickham-Smith made an appearance only to start the piece returning when it was all over. The piece in question was a stunning, religiously inspired drone, and it was nice to hear that his conviction to computer technology has not removed his thumbprint from his elegiac music.

Although never the extreme, Austria's Plego ambassadors compensated for their lack of performance with stunning abstract videos. Skit: a video band which consists of Mathias Gracchi from Farmers Manual and



DJ Dexter

Tina Frank (who is Plego's graphic designer as well as a musician) provided a highlight with an improvised mix of audio and video. The audio side was a thrilling mix of electronic abstraction, shards of static, intense volume interruptions and wild frenzied acoustics. The music was mirrored in the video's shapes and colours which were equally fragmented, demanding and exciting. Plego's Melbourne crowd love male witness reported to have shed tears, while other folk moved about in what can loosely be described as 'dancing' and died the Sydney audience, shredding one of his tracks

Pimmon (left) with Dworzec



by cutting out every few seconds. At a sale expense you could see numerous people eat fingers firmly in ears.

The wide scope of the programme — which even encompassed satirical comedian Neil Hamburger — was enlightening, often perplexing, occasionally entertaining and always challenging. But the most heated debate focused around the entry of the laptop as instrument and the beats/noise/sound music produced by it. Overhearing oddball Australian composer Jon Rose complaining about all the attention Fernest was receiving, with arguments such as 'Anybody can do that' was especially weird. How many times have these words been uttered at such festivals? Does all the debating come from musicians who are determined not to lose their foothold in the avant garde tradition? Of course not, but the music and these festivals are all about change, technology, radical approaches to sound — its manipulation and presentation. It's comforting to know that sound can still provoke while entertaining, and be questioned by its audience, as was the case at Fernest's several shows. AMM's Keith Rowe demonstrated a confident display of what can be extracted from an instrument, in this case his signature tabasco guitar, however, his praise of acts such as Dworzec and Plego highlighted the fact that not all the pioneers are turning away from the new developments unfolding before them.

In retrospect, the festival didn't so much answer the key question 'What Is Music?' as raise yet more questions. Can disparate musical elements from various subcultures co-exist? Does the inert feather-ruffling show here constitute art? Can anyone really do this? Is this language appropriate for the present day? Is there an avant garde tradition which must be consulted prior to performing at such events? These are all questions that have been thrown about for years, but the fact that a festival like this can survive and still provide such questions in an age where everything has been said is a rewarding enough.

MARK HARWOOD



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out there

April's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts



Looping at Lovebytes: Terre Thaemlitz

UK Festivals

All Tomorrow's Parties

The second attempted gathering of the cardigan tribes on the Sussex coast features performances from Sonic Youth, Stereolab, Mogwai, Arab Strap, High Llamas, Labradford, Hood, Super Furry Animals, Two Dollar Guitar, Pled: Red American Laika, Sugar Ros, The For Carnation, Ganger, Gorke's Zygotic Hyno, Shafac, Pione, Pram, Scott 4 and Snow Patrol. Rye Camber Sands Holiday Centre, 7-9 April. £90 booking/08700 104555. Web: www.alltomorrowsparties.com

Cheltenham International Jazz Festival

Among the highlights is the 15th edition of this annual festival in Gloucestershire is a rare UK performance from saxophonist Arthur Blythe, plus Roy Hargrove, Neil Savinney and Courtney Pine. Cheltenham various venues 27 April-1 May. Times/prices vary. Booking 01242 227979.

Cornucopia

Julian Cope's mini-Meltdown on the South Bank focuses unsurprisingly on Krautrock and its twisted aftermath. The first night (1 April) features Cope's new group Brain Drain and his collaboration with Spiritualized's keyboards man Thegpausandra Skyray and Dodgy. Group Names: Candidates Universal Ponzies, And Groundhogs and Kid Strange. The second night, meanwhile, has rare appearances from the month's cover stars Cool and the original line-up of Ash Ra Tempel with Klaus Schulze and Manuel Göttsching. London Queen Elizabeth Hall and Royal Festival Hall, 1-2 April. Times/prices vary. 020 7960 4242.

F:East

The ongoing celebration of pan-African arts and culture continues to live up to suburban Barret with Gayan, an evening of gamelan blended with Ugandan music and jazz (5 April). Frank Chickens (7) and a club night from 10 May, Times/prices vary. 020 8449 0048.

Lovebytes

Three-day programme of digital art and music featuring Terre Thaemlitz, Kim Cascone, Scanner and Tomie. Tween Oyds, Ade Ward, Tom Fleming, Hiko Maasala and a series of sound-based multimedia works called Digital Space. Sheffield Workstation Gallery and Showroom Cinema, 6-8 April. Info 0114 221 0393. Web: www.lovebytes.org.uk

Sonic Boom

Curated by Dave Toop and co-sponsored by The Wire, this is the largest sound exhibition ever staged in the UK, showcasing sculptures and installations by Brian Eno, Scanner, Lee Ranaldo, John Oswald, Christian Marclay, Roy Lee, Philip Jeck, Pan Sonic, Paul Schutzer, Joe Banks, Project OAK, Max Eastley & Thomas Koner, Angèle Bulloch, Omara Kubisch, Rafael Toral, Russell Mills, Chico McMurtrie, Paul Bunwell and Henk Dono. In addition, there will be a host of spin-off events, including talks and workshops, as well as a season of live performances curated by The Wire. London Hayward Gallery, 27 April-18 June, 16/14 10am-6pm (Tuesdays). Wednesdays to 8pm. 020 7928 3144. Web: www.hayward-gallery.org.uk

Soundcheck 2000

A series of free concerts devoted to contemporary jazz featuring Marilyn Crispell

Gary Peacock/Paul Mosan, Joanne Brackeen and Tommy Smith. Chick Lyall. Paul Harrison Trio. Dave Conway Ensemble and Nguyen Le. Glasgow CCA, 31 March-2 April. Times/prices vary. 0141 332 0522.

The 1000 Year Journey

Touted as the UK's largest festival of gypsy music (that should get the Home Office worried), this event celebrates a variety of Eastern European music and art. Performers include Masafi, Taraf De Haidouks, Goran Bregovic, Vera Bilo and Jose Merce plus films, talks and exhibitions. London Barbican, 30 April-14 May. Info 020 7638 8891. Web: www.barbican.org.uk

International Festivals

Domino

This festival of music from the margins, hosted by the Belgian Ancient Belgique venue, reaches its third edition. This year's performers include Labradford, Pan American Matt Herbert, Neil Savinney, The Third Eye Foundation, Dom & Roland, Godspeed You! Black Emperor, and Fly Pan Am. Belgium Brussels Ancient Belgique, 3-9 April. Web: www.obconvents.be

Auxiliary

A Wire-sponsored season of electronic music in Oslo featuring Videslav Gely, Stefan Schneider and Soul Static Sound (6 April). Kid-606. Leiser, C/D Densheraven and Bob Mills (20). Oslo Yoshihito (27). Norway Oslo BKA, Thursdays. Web: www.bkaqaz.com

Distorsion 2000

Included as part of Bologna's European Capital of Culture celebrations, this festival is "the annual vanguard on the state of production of innovative dance music." Proving their worth will be Underground Resistance (maybe), Aux BB & Keith Tucker, Cylob, O Arcangelo, Pacu, Van Fie-Acson, Mirco Passaroni, Andrea Benedetti, Werner Hasler and Monophonic. There will also be a screening of Iara Lee's documentary on electronic music, *Mobulations*. Italy Bologna various venues, 7-8 April. Info 0039 051 370855. Web: www.lapropiet.org

Le Printemps De Bourges

French festival covering all the bases from indie to reggae, rap to HipHop. Featured performers include Yla Yla Tengro, Lou Reed L7, Two Dollar Guitar, Boss Hog, Gomez, Orchestre National De Barbes, Toots & The

Maytals, Septeto Nacional, Mad Professor, Horace Andy, Chibb Tanna, Grania Dufosse, Susan Sista Crew, Ugly Ducking, The Creators, DJ Her, Howie B, Romanthony, Roy Ayers and Funkisong. France Bourges various venues 19-24 April. 00 33 2 48 70 61 11.

Taktlos

The annual Swiss Improv showcase continues to roll along with Lee Ranaldo/William Hooper, Christian Marclay, Oerke Bailey, Evan Parker, Katie Parthenos, Voice Crack, Erik McGuyer, Muller, Catherine Jauchus, Paul Wachsmann, Shabazzmi and Markus Eichenberger with The Ensemble Sordani, Dornon, Switzerland Basel Adonis and Zurich Rote Fabrik, 6-9 April. Info 00 41 1 448 1461. Web: www.taktlos.net

Ulrichsberger Kaleidophon

Three-day festival of challenging jazz and improv in the Austrian Alps. Scaling the heights of musical freedom will be Eddie Prosser, The OKU Trio, The ICP Orchestra featuring Mike Menegobeg and Ben Binnitt, Paul Durnall Trio, Phil Durrant's Tacklin, Taku Sugimoto, Sylvie Grosse and Lucien Nigeli, Etrug, Antisten and Ali Takoue and Rudi Marhal. Austria Ulrichsberger Jazzfestival, 28-30 April. 00 43 7288 6301. Web: www.ulrichsbergerjazzfestival.at

Special Events

Interference

Hosted by The Wire and the LSA Centre, this series of forums and live music continues with an audience with a wanderlust. Interference electroacoustic maestro Terre Thaemlitz (6 April, 8pm) and urban acoustic geography from LA-based sound artist Brandon LaBelle (27 April, 7pm). London LSA Centre, 6 April and 27 April. 16/13 020 7684 0201.

Jazz Sunday

A night of limits to Gick Fontaine, one of the world's foremost music documentary film makers. Highlights include films on Sonny Rollins, Ornette Coleman, Art Blakey, Roland Kirk, John Cage, Betty Carter, Billie Holiday Or John, John Henderson, Bristol CUBE Cinema, 2 April. 7pm. 0117 907 4190.

Meltdown Photography Exhibition

Portraits and on-stage images from Nick Cave's Meltdown 99 by our very own Simon Mack. Including snapshots of Cave, Nina Simone, Charlesimage Palestine, Roy Owen Stentors, Lee Hartwood, Bryan Ferry, Bino Bagelid.

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UNIVERSAL PANZIES, ANAÏ
GROUNDHOGS, KID STRANGE

Sunday 2 April 1PM/7PM
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out there

Dirty Three, Jimmy Scott, Janis Cowler and Kylie Minogue London Royal Festival Hall, 1-24 April 020 7600 4242

The Noise

Continuing Rob Mullender and Joe Banks' sound installation in an underground storeroom in the heart of the City of London London Foundry, until 16 April 020 7613 5817

Onedotzero

Billed as 'the world's largest dedicated digital art festival', the new media showcase contains plenty of crossover with music, and the festival will have host to videos by Dylan Kiedle (Adi N) To X, Kenworthy (Quamum, Groenewald), Mike Hills (Ar) Hammer & Tongue (Shitbit Simi) There will also be a showing of a short film about Jan Bon Jovi's pool cleaner (oh, yes) London KCA, 28 April-7 May, times varies, see 020 7930 3647 Web: www.onedotzero.com



John Cale

Out Of Bounds

As part of this festival of new British dance pieces, experimental vocalist Phil Martin and cellist Martin Schulz will accompany dancer Katharina Vogel during a performance called Velvet Igloo London Jacksons Lane Community Centre, 5 April, 7:30pm, 18/55, 020 8340 5226

School Of Sound

Approaching soundtracking as an art rather than a commercial imperative, this third annual symposium will focus on the role of voice in sound design. Speakers include David Toop, Mike Eggs, Michel Chion, Manfred Eichler, Tom Rabin, Peter Wollen, Claude Lelouch, Gregory Whitehead, Piers Plowright and Sarah Kozloff London RIBA, 12-15 April 54703188 020 7323 3437, Web: www.schoolofsound.co.uk

Soundgaze

Rude Machine Hayley Newman presents a performance piece in which electronic weaving scales trigger sound samples London ICA, 15 April, 2pm Includes a talk by Newman and 22 April, 6:30pm 020 7930 3647

Time Drops

A sound and light installation exploring the 'intensity of silence' The work is a collaboration between electroacoustic composer Akira Inayama and lighting designer Jude James London 15, 25 April-8 May, free 020 7611 5000

On Stage

Tony Allen The man who put the beat in Afrobeat works up a polyrhythmic storm Birmingham Royal Festival Hall, 16 April 11/10 021 6143 4525

AMM Improv legends in a rare appearance London Conway Hall, 19 April, 10/15/17 020 7242 8032

Kashket Amnarak Performances of morning and evening songs from one of India's finest Khyal singers London Kensington Town Hall, 2 April and 9 April, 10.30am and 7pm 020 7727 4566

Appalachian Journey Yo-Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer and Mark D. Connor perform their acclaimed fusion of classical and mountain music London Barbican, 11 April, 1pm, 020 7638 8891

Bill Newfound's Earthworks Ex-Progger continues his jazz cohesion Leamington Spa St Patrick's Irish Club, 14 April, 8.30pm, 16/15 01926 831728

John Cale Wales's biggest contribution to modern music: this side of the Budget embarks on a European tour Birmingham Ronnie Scott's 9 April 11/9.50, 021 6443 4525

Tyrry Gailier The return of the folk-punk brother London Forum, 14 April, 7pm 13/15 020 8961 5490

Caribbean Jazz Byophras A night of post-Cambrian fusion London Purcell Room, 2 April, 8pm, 12/50/10 020 7960 4242

Davud Goolian's Interjection Orchestra Former Test Dept multi-instrumentalist leads a merry band of punksters and awarists London Soco, 11 April, 8pm, 17/50 020 7392 9032

Claudio Diego & African Jazz Explosive South African trumpet leads a group of African improvisers London Purcell Room, 8 April, 8pm, 12/50/10 020 7960 4242

The For Carnation Brian McMahon (lead-sit) and group make their UK debut London Garage 6 April 8.50 020 7607 1818

46,000 Fibres with Lou Corball An evening of improv, soundscapes and spoken word from The Wire's own Ben Watson London Red Rose Club, 9 April, 7.30pm, 14/13 020 7263 7265

Free Base Powerhouse improv from Alan Wilkinson, Merco Matos and Steve Noble London Red Rose (3 April) Sheffield The Grapes (4) Leeds Warehouse (5)

Godfish Heavy duty electronics from Justin Broadrick and Co. Cork Nancy Spans, 7 April info see onedotzero

Ray Ragrove The US trumpet unveils a new format featuring Larry Wells London Jazz Cafe, 26 April, 11.30 020 7344 0044

Codaped You Black Emperor! + Tya Paw Am The Great White North comes to London's South Bank and beyond Cork Nancy Spans (1 April), Dublin HQ (2), London Royal Festival Hall (3), Birmingham venue (4), Bristol University (5)

Craig 32 years down the line and David Allen and his cosmic hippies are still going from zero to infinity Leeds Irish Centre (13 April) Coventry Coliseum (14), Manchester University (15), Southampton Brook (20)

Brat Preece (12, 23), Exeter Phoenix (27) London Hammermill Palace (7 May)

Nik-666 Galtch terrorism from San Diego's finest and colons including Lissar and Christy De Babelon Leeds Fife (14 April) London Electricity Showrooms (5) Cask Trickle Arts Centre (27)

Luika Post-rock from Margaret Fiedler and crew London Jazz Cafe, 4 April, 10/15/15, 020 7344 0044

Dave Liebman A rare UK appearance from the former Miles Davis sideman London Pace Express (13-15 April) Birmingham Hall (16) London Sinfonietta A weekend of concerts highlighting Britain's best young composers London Queen Elizabeth Hall, 15-16 April, free, 020 7960 4242

Jon Lucien Folk-jazz legend croons for the Acid Jazz set London Jazz Cafe, 4 April, 11/15/15, 020 7344 0044

Pat Metheny Fusion from American guitarist, bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Bill Stewart, Kendal Leisure Centre (5 April), Leeds Irish Centre (6), Pao's Arts Centre (7), London Barbican (8), Leicester De Montfort Hall (9) Birmingham Symphony Hall (10)

Toussaint N'Dour The part of Senegalese music tours the UK Leicester De Montfort Hall (26 April), Warwick Arts Centre (28) London Hammermill Apollo (29)

Event 13 May Glasgow Royal Concert Hall (5) Bangor Abbey (17), Manchester Brinsford Hall (18)

Papa 36 Summertime galaxes from Dave Pao, Alan Linn and associates, Cork Lobby (22 April), Dublin Whelans (23), Belfast Ards (24), Glasgow King Arts (25), Manchester Roadhouse (26), Leeds Fife & Fife (27), London Garage (28), Brighton Old Market Theatre (29), Nottingham Hevilly (30)

People Under The Stairs Underground LA HipHop duo emerge for a short UK tour Manchester Planet K (13 April), Sheffield Republic (19), Bristol Blue Mountain (20), London Fife (21), Brighton Concord (22) Glasgow Arches (26), Dundee Foundation (27) Aberdeen Glow (28)

Piano Nerdly synthetics from the Midlands, with Magnetophone and Duck DQ lending a hand Birmingham Flapper & Fife, 5 April, 14/13 021 236 2421

Omara Portuondo & Orquesta Aragón Female member of The Buena Vista Social Club performs with Cuba's legendary pioneers of changa London Royal Festival Hall, 27 April 20.00 122-110 020 7960 4242

Bobby Previte & The Creative Jazz

Orchestra The New York drummer pays tribute to Joan Pao Manchester Royal Northern College of Music (7 April), Birmingham CBSO Centre (8)

Virginia Rodrigues Afro-Brazilian songstress makes her debut UK appearance London Barbican, 19 April, 7.30pm, 12/15/12 020 7638 8891

Rothko Abstract expressionist post-rockers launch new album London Strangemore Bar, 13 April, 8pm, free

Gill Scott-Heron The revolution will be live London Jazz Cafe, 11-15 April, 11/15/15, 020 7344 0044

Archule **Shogun & Andrew Hill** Two legends of 60s jazz attempt to recapture their fire music London Queen Elizabeth Hall, 13 April, 7.45pm, 17/50/15/15, 020 7960 4242

Inho Slater Funky electronics from Brighton's high point of Techno Glasgow The Arches (28 April), Leeds Orbit (29)

Solo Surfers Austin's couch potato beat heads on their first UK tour, Sheffield Cus Club (13 April), Brighton Big Beat Boutique (14), Leeds Faversham (15), London Gardening Club (16)

Souls Of Misfit Members of LA's Herophylls crew wreck the shop with Scratch Pals DJ Apollo Glasgow The Arches, 9 April 0141 221 4001

South Bank Camelion Players An evening of courtly Japanese gamelan alongside the percussive Balinese style London Queen Elizabeth Hall, 27 April, 7.45pm, 12/50/15/15, 020 7960 4242

David Thomas & The Two Pale Boys The Crucis Beleneth blooms on the South Coast with help from Rothko and Plonson Bassoon Brighton Hall, 8 April, 8pm, 17/55/15 01273 77941

U Roy The legendary Jamaican DJ performs with Johnny Ozy Moore, founder of The Skatalites, Sheffield Walemans Arts Centre, 7 April, 10.30pm 12/15/10, 020 8568 1176

Violent Femmes Acoustic, psycho-punk from Gordon Gano Brian Ritchie and Guy Hoffman Manchester University (6 April), Glasgow Garage (7)

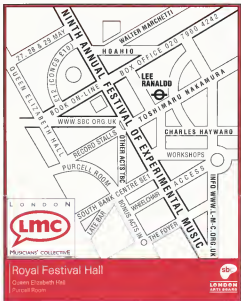
Cleveland Watkins & The Source The jazz vocalist's group performs alongside guitarist Tony Romo and crew London Queen Elizabeth Hall, 28 April, 7.45 pm, 15/50/12 020 7960 4242

Jah Wobble The king of bass riffs out his Deep Space group London Hiss (5 April), Manchester Band On The Wall (7)

Club Spaces

40Hz Electronic excursions from Ausgang, Tom Middleton (bbc), Teknikor Ka and Assad London Clinic, 22 April 10pm-4am 55

All Angels An evening of new and improvised music in local context featuring Steve Beresford, John Bisset and John Edwards, and (Burkhard Benshoff) DovesMark Wastall London St Michael and All Angels Church, 14 April, 8-10pm, 15/14



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Analogue City Techno throwdown with Joey Beltram, Damon Wild, Andrew Weatherall, Colin Dale, Craig Thomas, Grooveswider and Frankie D (London Miss, 8 April, 10pm-3am \$12, 020 7375 0465)

Breakin' / Break Hip-hop and breakdancing from MK, Proke, Force 10, Rob Life, Skeg and Tuklor (London Plug 90, 15 April, 9pm-3am, \$5/5)

Cafe In The Community Multimedia club night with Max Brennan, Steve Holistic, Aaron Thumds, Fletcher, Nick Nume and Gae In The Community (London Spitz, 14 April 9pm-3am \$6, 020 7362 9032)

Cleek Reija Hendricks and Focus come together to envision 'The future of club music' (London ICA, 14 April 9pm-1am, \$4/13, 020 7930 3647)

Dervish Hip-hop, funk, breakbeat and the lib from Numskullz, Rob Lux, David Eye Knight and Monkey Magic (Leicester Princess Charlotte, 7 April, 9pm-2am, \$6, 0115 912 9000)

Diffusion Free thinking electronic/ from Robert Hampson, Tom Wallace and Clive Graham (London Below 54, 25 April, 7pm-midnight free, 020 7928 7337)

Electro Magnetic Intolerance An evening of experimental film and music featuring Desormentation, Tom Dooyoi Dummie Run, Semiconductor and others (Brighton Komedia 5 April, 8pm-12.30am, \$4/12, 01273 775687)

Evidence Hip-hop and beyond with Mr. Thing, The Herbalizer, Elie Tebea, Sahin Dellemons, DJ Bina and A-Cide (London The End, 12 April, 10pm-3am \$6/14, 020 7419 9199)

Extraneous A microscopic post-ambient listening lounge with Andrew Berthing, Desormentation, Paul Hopkin, JJAT, Short Trix and Jane Takan (London 291 Gallery, 6 April 8pm-midnight, \$4/3, 020 7265 9760)

Home Taping The Sneaker Pimps host another night devoted to home tapes (London ICA, 13 April 9pm-1am \$7/5, 020 7930 3647)

Instant Music Meeting Paul Hood's experimental night debuts Charles Hayward's new quartet featuring Pat Thomas, Harry Beckwith and John Edwards (London Spitz, 19 April 8pm, \$6/14, 020 7392 9033)

Karaoke Scenarios **Jay Rawbans** Semiconductor, Cynia Blue, DJ Dead, Desormentation, Necropolis, Matt Consume and Stella Start try to put a spell on you with their versions of 'Scenarios' Jay classics (Brighton Lift, 24 April, 8-11pm, \$3/5, 01273 779411)

Klinker Everyone's favourite Dado Improv shows this month featuring Nigel Berchis, Flip-the Orchestra and El Sad (16 April), Dwight Fizzell and Yu Baba (13), Jim & Hughy (20), Nick Danger, Rye and Full Fat Mat (27) and LEGO and Kabrick Townsend Trio (28) (London Susex, Thursdays 8.30pm, \$4/5)

Kosmische In honour of Florian Schneider's

birthday, Baron Wasteland, Pete Woodhead, DJ Ziggy, Desormentation, Jim Backhouse and Horton Jupiter will make like showroom dummies for the Kraftwerk tribute night (London Upstairs at the Garage, 22 April 9pm-3am \$5, 020 7607 1818)

Little Stabs At Happiness Mark Wither 6 night featuring experimental film screenings and 70s/80s school disco tunes (London ICA, 22 April, 9pm-1am \$8-14, 020 7930 3647)

Mixed Substances Drum 'n' bass, electro and breakbeat from Jusica, Endemic Voud Nick Pond and Doug Hart (London Junction, 7 April, 9pm-3am \$3, 020 7647 7615)

Noise Club West Country celebration of all things loud and thrashy with Panic Strapper (16 April) and Desormentation (20) Bristol Old Port House, formerly Thursdays, 9pm-2am, \$2, 0117 927 7877

NY Sushi Free breakbeat mix with Adam F and J Mack (31 March), Grooveswider and DJ Apollo (7 April), Mickey Finley and Jacques Lu Cont (14), magical mystery DJs (21) and Randall and 100% Oxyamne (28) Sheffield Unit Friskys, 10pm-3.30am, \$7.50/6.50, 0114 267 1861

Perverse Science An evening of HipHop, Afro-bass, disco and House with X-ecutioner, Maria Sarista, Scratch Perrett, Prime Cuts, Pete Herbert, Bass Junkie, Orson and Greedy Gains (London 333 Club, 21 April, 10pm-3am, \$10/8, 020 7739 5949)

Rehabilitation Club night put on by the Low & Auler label with Spongbeay, Tench Soundstage Soundsystem and Summit Soundsystem (London Foundry, 7 April, free 6pm-midnight)

Riachi Sabbath Celebrate the day of rest with They Came From The Stars (Saw The Stars), Desormentation, Massimo Nik and Leon Brighton Lift Club, 16 April, \$3/2, 01273 779411

Riachi Sabbath London Crawling up from the South Coast, Heretics Dee Kine, Sonora Warrors and Desormentation continue to invade the capital with Private Subtopro, Tula (9 April) and Present, Tale and Foster (23) London Nighting Hill Arts Club, Thursdays, 4pm-11pm \$3, 020 7460 4459

Sprawl Edgy electronics with Vert, Asphie 61 S-Horlitz and Baffone (London Global Cafe, 7.30pm-midnight, \$3/12, 020 7387 2242)

Toucheed Graham Massey's night for free electronics (Punchliner Bands On The Wall, 28 April, 8pm, \$6/15, 0161 833 0682)

Turntable Jazz Surprize Techniques cuts from Prime Cuts, Reg, Meek, Blood One, Aof, Kuts and Placemellow (Melod D, Brighton Lift, 3 April, 8pm-11pm, \$3/5, 01273 779411)

Twins Bleeps Skipped Puma and a zovet France present a night of out electronics with special guests Alexandra & Underwood from the Lucky Kitchen label (Newcastle Dispensary, 14 April, free, info 0191 232 7880)

Radio

National

BBC Radio 1 91.9 FM

John Peel Tuesdays-Thursdays 70pm-midnight The now venerable mix of rock, indie, Techno, Jungle, Electronica, dub and the legendary sessions

Giles Peterson Wednesdays midnight-2am Up- and down-tempo beats, experimental drum 'n' bass, Funk, psychedelic soul, and plenty more in between

Andy Kershaw Thursdays midnight-2am Raw music and global sounds, including folk, roots, reggae, out rock and more

Fabio & Grooverider Fridays 2-4am Two hours of vanguard drum 'n' bass

Westwood Rap Show Fridays 11pm-1am/Saturdays 9pm-midnight/Ten's best breaking Hip-hop tapes

BBC Radio 3 90.0 FM

Late Junction Mondays-Thursdays 10.15-11.30pm Verity Sharp and Fiona Talkington present news and discussion of a diverse musical selection

Jazz Legends Fridays 4-5pm Archive recordings and interviews, presented by Julian Joseph This month: Dizzy Gillespie (7 April), Herbie Hancock (14), Art Blakey (21), Duke Ellington (28)

Jazz Line-Up Saturdays 4-5pm Jazz magazine featuring interviews and CD reviews, presented by Stacey Kent and Clare Martin

Jazz Focus Saturdays 6-6.30pm Alyn Shapton presents The Shoppe Of Things To Come, a five-part examination of the music of Ornette Coleman (11-29 April)

Mixing It Sundays 10.45-11.30pm Eclectic mix of new music and discourse from Robert Sennell and Mark Russell

Jazz On 3 Saturdays 11.30pm-1am Modern jazz recorded in session and concert. This month: Don Ellis (1 April), Keith Tippett (8), Tim Berne's Big Satun (15), Evan Parker Quartet featuring Steve Beresford (22), Chad Wackerman (29)

Regional

BBC Derby 91.2/91.5/104.5 FM, 1116 MW

Soundscapes Sundays 3-4pm Ashley Franklin plays instrumental, electronica, contemporary classical/systems music, New Age and Ambient

BBC Greater London Radio (GLR) 94.9 FM

Post-ambient Wednesdays 8-10.30pm Ross Allen sorts a motley, morphing selection of new music from spacey jazz to minimalism to electronica and leftfield pop

Charlie Gillett Saturdays 7-9pm Rock, roots, dub, World Music, blues, R&B and more sounds of the city

BBC Lancashire 95.6/103.6/104.5 FM, 655 MW

On The Wire Sundays 1-2.30pm Steve Barker's three-hour mix of rock, experimental electronics, out rock, free jazz, World Music and beyond

BBC Merseyside 95.8 FM, 1485 MW

PTB Tuesdays midnight-1am Currently, Late World Noise, Roger Hill's mix of avant rock, psychedelia, warped ambient and global gems in themed sequences

BBC Scotland 92.8-94.1 FM

From Beant To HipHop Wednesdays 8-9pm David Sellers drops jazz and new beats

Beat Patrol Sundays 8-9pm Peter Allan plays latest music across the spectrum

Electronica Sundays 9-10pm Paul Percival airs the latest Techno and dance tracks

Gable Radio 89.6 FM (Gillies Keynes)

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epiphanies

Stephen McRobbie of The Pastels reveals how Swell Maps separated the geeks from the neds in Glasgow

In the summer of 1979, at the age of 16, I was not only OK at football, tennis and most sports, but had even inveigled my way into a seeming acceptance by the bad kids – the school 'neds', in the Glasgow vernacular. Of course, this meant dumbing down, and like a bad method actor, sometimes I'd get caught out. But mostly my relationship with the neds was quite satisfactory, and I was happy to be their friend at a time when they held sway, ruling the school with their teenage mug humour as yet undimmed by bad exam results, and ultimately a lack of imagination.

In the last couple of years at school, though, a seismic power shift took place and the neds dropped out of the picture, making way for a new hierarchy of straightlaced smart kids and high-achieving former geeks. I realised it was time to make some new friends, and as I was starting to get into music, I naively thought that was my best option. At the time I already had records by The Beatles, The Buzzcocks, The Ramones and Roky Music, which to me seemed quite promising, although I was humble enough to know I needed a little assistance to develop my tastes. I'd start hitting on fellow pupils if I saw them reading the NME in the common room. "I see The Buzzcocks have got a new single out. * Potential pal. "Who cares? Don't you know The Buzzcocks have sucked since Devoto left?"

I'd try to up the ante. "What do you think of the new Wire LP?" "Really bad. They look like a bunch of geography teachers."

To my horror, I was discovering that the former geeks had gone power mad, drunk on their own newfound hipness, and were actually a nasty bunch of little fascists without even the redeeming good-fun guarantee of the neds. The remaining pupils in my year were predominantly middle class, and I soon realised that the most popular group with the posh kids was Crass when I saw them smugly carrying around Anarchy stencils for spraypainting graveyards and the like.

Fortunately, the first step to salvation was not that far away, and eventually I managed to team up with an outsider kid two years younger than me. Grant and his older brother had amassed an incredible collection of independent and freak music which they'd blast at awesome levels through a guitar amplifier. This was my introduction to The Residents and Throbbing Gristle. I started to notice that a lot of the records I liked best were on a label called Rough Trade and, after reading an old Paul Morley review, I decided to take the plunge with the fantastic sounding Swell

pretty wild, but I have heard wider music. But as it turned out, I hadn't heard wider pop music, and that was Swell Maps' trump card: joyous, uplifting, full-on destructo-pop, abstracting unexpectedly into real moments of beauty. I was faced with a dilemma: should I share it with my wee pal or was this just meant to be my thing? I thought of all the little pricks back in the common room and decided I didn't want to be elitist. I would be a Swell Maps crusader.

First I needed to buy everything I could find by Swell Maps, which at the time was only three singles, though fortunately there were side projects too. Next I felt I needed to start thinking like a Map by getting into other music they cited, like Rough Trade labelmates The Raincoats and Television Personalities, and their influences: Faust, Can and This Heat. After a while I'd gone hardcore and was getting my music direct from the Rough Trade shop in Ladbroke Grove, London, where Swell Maps sometimes worked. Occasionally there'd be a friendly note in amongst the crazy amounts of records and fanzines. I was now

buying. Back then Rough Trade seemed to embody every aspect of a music culture I craved, and their mail came to me as part Red Cross parcel, part Open University correspondence.

I recently started to re-read these fanzines, which had names like *Let's Be Adult About This*, *Real Shocks* and *Station Alien*. Immediately I was reminded of the high quality graphics, the warmth of the writing and the spirit of adventure. These qualities inevitably reflected the stance that Rough Trade had taken in building on punk's nihilism to foster an educated, inquisitive fanbase that, for a while, dismantled the bloated punk star system, and shifted the emphasis back onto music and a new community. I will never forget the thrill of following a label whose uncontrived eclecticism introduced me to everything from Metal Urban to Robert Wyatt, Augustus Pablo to Cabaret Voltaire.

I always tried to remember the lessons I'd taken from that era of

Rough Trade as I left school and started to learn how to make music for myself. Soon I found I was making contact with people who'd been similarly drawn to the label, like my friend David who was obsessed with building a fuzzbox that would simultaneously emulate the two great treble sounds of The Raincoats: their rhythm guitar and violin. By then Swell Maps had split, but their music never really left my life, and it was through them that I met a soulmate who encouraged me to believe we had it within us to participate in, and add something to, the music culture that we loved.



Maps, one of the few groups that my new friend didn't have any records by. *A Trip To Monneville* was such a jolt to my senses that even now when I hold it in my hands and look at the front cover of a suburban house spontaneously combusting, I can't help but feel slightly nostalgic for my 16 year old self, just about to play it for the first time. There I am, glazed then captivated, playing it over and over, notching the volume up a little more each time, trying to squeeze a little more out of it. I wanted to rationalise it like Paul Morley or something, and I thought, Well, this sounds

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